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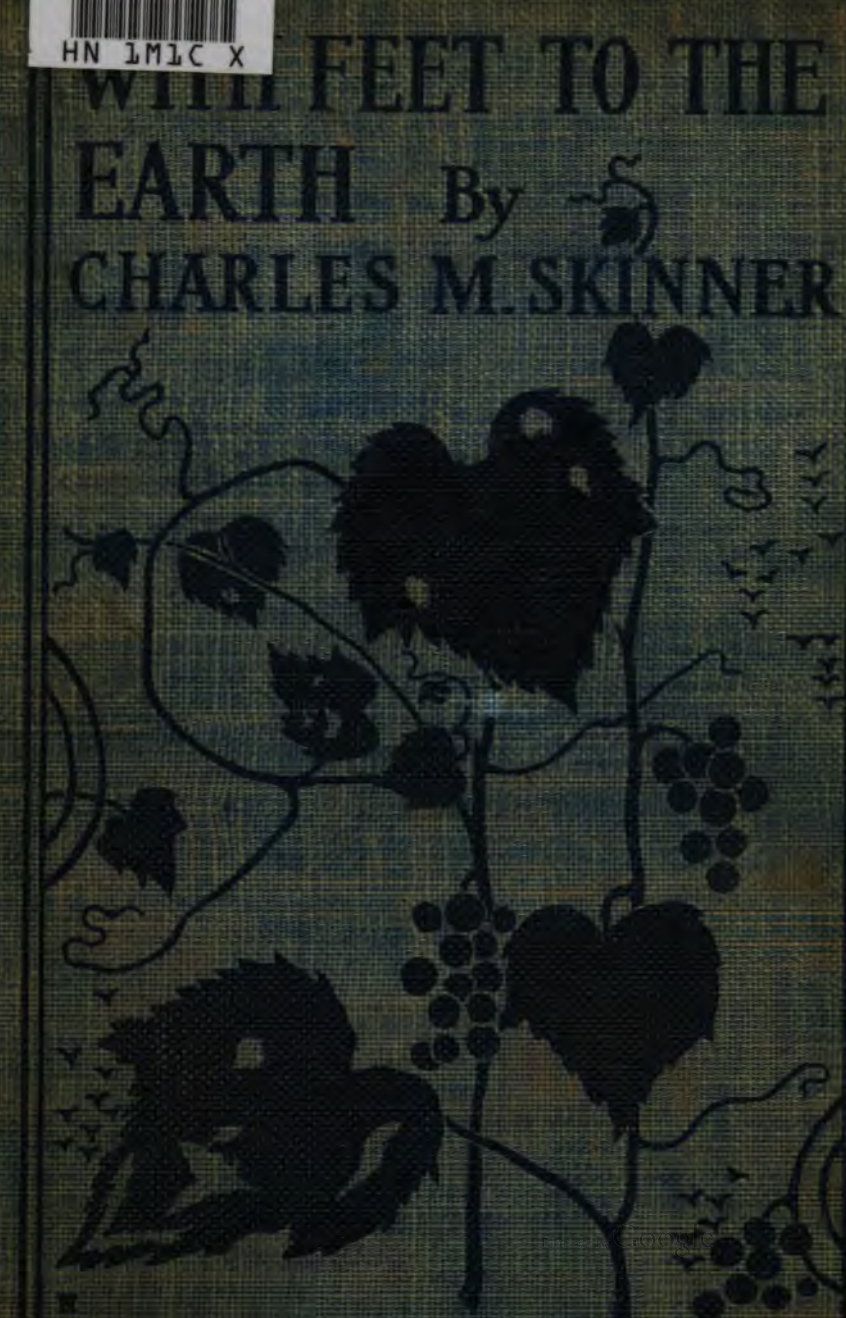
WITH FEET TO THE EARTH

By

CHARLES M. SKINNER



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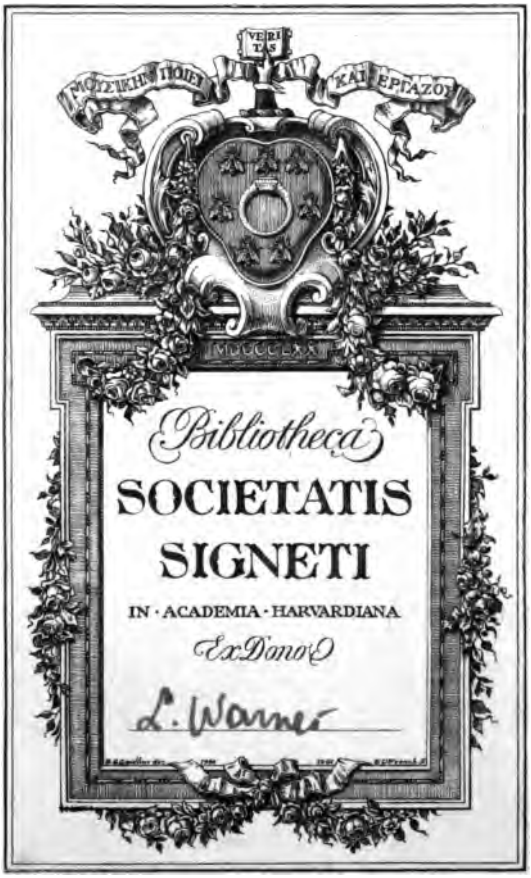

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BY CHARLES M. SKINNER

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by

Charles M. Skinner

Author of
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Philadelphia & London
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1898

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TO MY BROTHERS
OTIS AND WILL
I DEDICATE THIS
BOOK IN MEMORY
OF THE PLEASANT
TRAMPS WE HAVE
TAKEN TOGETHER

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Preface

READER, you have warning that these explorations promise little peril and adventure; and if you are fond of steady going you may complain when you are checked and asked to look at things, or, worse, to think or talk about them. Yet, because the road is always open, you need not turn into the lanes and by-ways, unless you are so minded. I hope that our jaunt together may be made in good humor, even when you disagree with me, as you are sure to do sometimes, and that the little outing wherein we shall ramble as much in talk as with our feet may profit us both. If I shall persuade you out of your room

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or office, be it for an hour, to taste air and think away from aches and business, the message in this my book will not have gone out in vain.

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Contents

	PAGE
THE WANDERER	7
REMINISCENT AND PERSONAL	20
SOME SAMPLE WALKS	35
PARTLY PRACTICAL	70
NIGHT-PROWLS IN THE STREETS	96
SOME HUMBUGS OF SCIENCE	117
A RUSTLER'S CONSCIENCE	141
SATISFACTION WITH THE COUNTRY	151
SOLITUDE AND COMPANY	167
AUTUMN SIGHTS AND MUSINGS	190

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The Wanderer

SONS of Ishmael, scorn the pity that is put upon you. Wanderers? What harm of that? So long as you keep from mischief and don't marry, you may as well be wandering as sitting on door-steps. Rolling stones, that gather no moss, are sometimes bright and pleasing objects, and it is when moss gets hold of it that a stone decays. Tramps who idle are worse than idlers who tramp. There are too many non-producers, but there are too many others who have no saving grace of vagrancy in their souls. Their noses trace figures up and down pages of ledgers; they never look out of a window; they have forgotten about natural happiness; they live to accumulate, or to rub elbows with their kind, or to improve the human race after their private ideas. Air and earth are tonics to body, mind, and morals. The man who is

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out of doors all the time may be rough, but his manhood is sound. The mean people, the misers, the sharpers, the tyrants, have no vagrom dispositions. Soldiers, sailors, cowboys, lumbermen, hunters, fishers, prospectors, wagoners, missionaries,—you find them good company, don't you? Yet it is a company that may spoil in the house. The man who has sky in his eye has sunlight deeper in, and the green things of earth make fertile tracts in his head. It is a self-preservative instinct, a means to health, a business against glooms, that gets folks out of doors. Only since we had furnaces and radiators instead of fireplaces, only since we invented tenements, only since yards, trees, and songbirds were abolished in our cities, have we taken to nervous dyspepsia, lame livers, Bright's disease, neurosis, pessimism, paresis, and corns. Bah! Get away from them all. Turn your steps to the country. Improve your leisure with vagrancy.

When weather and disposition permit,—the former does for eight months in the year; the latter ought to always,—sprawl

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on the grass, inhale its acid fragrance, note the life that wriggles and scuttles beneath it. If it is spring, see how the firstlings of the year push through the earth, folded in a spike to press the more subtly and safely, some of them red and sober until they get foothold, that animals who prey on vegetation may overlook them, some hiding beneath others. Plants when young have frequent semblances to each other. They are indeterminate because they want to cheat the preying insect. Their primary leaves give no hint of the completed plant. When you first see jack-in-the-pulpit you fancy that poison-ivy has put up spathes. Then, look up. In early May the birch-woods, seen towards the sun, show green at its sweetest and most spiritual. The palette does not contain this quality.

Thus to rest between earth and sky, the sun ninety-three million miles over your head and warming it, eight thousand miles of rock beneath you, and life leaving darkness to meet the sun, is to be yourself penetrated by the vital currents that shape creation out of chaos. Blood starts quicker

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in spring because of our physical and mental sympathy with nature. Even in the physical distress of summer heat one feels the life-tides in the earth, the air. The sun is the reason for them. Life multiplies as he is near. Antæus-like, you are vigorated, calmed, assured, and sane when you touch the ground and bury your anxieties beneath it. Behold the stumblings of the new family of lady-bugs—why lady-birds?—in the catnip; watch the spiders setting their gins for flies; see the jewels on the insects that hum and toddle through the herbage: their life is in your veins; it is common to us all. How little suffices! With Omar Khayyám, we realize at these moments that bread and drink, a book, a tree, a song, and love are all we need. We envy millionaires in our bad and unproductive hours. All their money cannot buy the health and delight of this idleness at the wayside, spent in chewing shreds of bark and fancy. The best things are free to all of us. Never be so purse-rich as to refuse them.

As walking is the most economical, it is

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the most neglected means of locomotion. You can at least divert some time in your vacations and holidays to this ancient and not ignoble business. Away from town, care-free, with a handful of needed property, and staff and scrip, every prospect is new, every day an adventure. Whether your way lead through the well-attended farms of New England, the fat gardens of the Middle States, the ocean-like prairie, the chaos of the Bad Lands, the splendors of the mountains, or the enervating palm lands of the South, whether you plod beside Rhine, Rhone, or Hudson, under the green arches of Lincoln, across the wild, sour moors of Yorkshire, or through the lonely glens of Wales and Scotland, your seeing will be your own, your impressions will be fresh, you will learn, you will rejoice.

Foreign travel is not necessary. You can walk to your town's edge and pace some miles of country road in the gloaming. It is a meditative season, that, and the experience is wholesome after the day's business. And if it does not frighten you when trees and bushes gather for a jump,

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or whisper and snicker as you pass, you may prolong your tramp into the starlight and moonlight time. I have climbed hills at midnight, in the snow, and the glory of heaven rested on the earth and did not wake it. For nature really sleeps at night, as man, her offspring, does. The regular motion of the wind is her breath. To be awake is strange. The pranks of cities are out of place in the country after sunset, and it is there and then one is thrown upon himself; then he must decide whether stars and frogs are good or evil company; for the man who runs away from town to escape himself finds himself when he reaches the woods. He will gain on a hill-top a power of soul-sight to look down on the plain of life and trace the paths it is well for men to tread, or his attention will be taken with the cold and the briers. He will grope about the roots of trees, finding them made to fall over, or he will hear symphonies among their leaves, and calls to climb, to toss in their leafy hammocks, to dream epics.

We but half desert our species when we

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walk alone in the woods or by the sea, for both the waves and the leaves are talking, —talking of durations and principles, not the gossip of the corners. We think all such speech mere sound, and that our own babble is wiser. If only we could hear true! Rustling leaves, the gust, water's plash and tumble, bird-songs, the cries of brutes: these were prologues to the human comedy and are its accompaniment. Perhaps when men had a sense of smell as keen as that of dogs they also knew how to listen, and could read at least the temporal meanings in this talk of the world. Does the tree have the same speech whether it is well or ill, dry or surfeited, growing or dying? And it is a fact about this speech. The waves rise because a wind has come; that stirs because the sun has somewhere baked the earth, and the hot air, rising, leaves a vacuum that cooler air rushes in to fill; the sun has baked, because——? And there is a sun, because——? Shall we always express our relation to the outer world by an interrogation point?

Take your best self with you when you

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walk, for to divest the world of the personal factor in our understanding of it is impossible. It must reflect us, and be open to all impressions. Man is an animal who can live more outside of himself than the others can. Or, to reverse that proposition, he can absorb the most into himself. So full is nature of delight that we suffer a kind of stun of plenitude in her company. We are often surprised at the beauty revealed in a familiar scene by a photograph. We had looked along the same road, at the same clump of wood, the same tangle of wild flowers, and it had not seemed wonderful. That is because equal beauty unfolds around us in every direction, and our eyes are not trained to the selective use that is art. Yet, the sympathetic tramp may be an artist with his eye. Why not? If we look with the unprejudiced minds of children we are artists, in so far.

The trouble is, we know what ought to be in a certain place, and we think we see it; but often we do not. There are even mathematic and mechanic falsities that are æsthetic truths. When a horse is painted

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in action as the photograph shows him he moves less vigorously than he does when all four legs are impossibly thrust out. When the broad painter strikes out a tree, puts in a figure, gives you a distant field with a wipe of the brush, he is false to detail, but true to effect. In music some of the finest resolutions are from discord into harmony, whereas, theoretically, there should be no discord. Take the E that sounds through the close of the "Siegfried Idyl,"—sounds with the continuity and depth of a distant sea. As the key modulates into B and F# minor, so the bass should change, but the result would be petty, lifeless. The E tones on, defiant of alterations in the melody, and the mind rests on it, as it does on a firm base in architecture. It is the breadth in art of all kinds, the freedom, soundness, surety, repose, that make it great. Littleness, fussiness, over-elaboration, are never caught from the material world.

The great charm of nature is that it fits itself to every one of our selves and every one of our humors, and we thereby get a

"Glides into his darker musings... steals away their sharpness ere he is aware"

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whimsey into our heads that it serves us,—an amusing idea. What do you suppose nature thinks of men? Looks up to them as her perfect work, or down on them as the most prying, meddlesome, troubling children she has begotten? She is full of lessons for us:

Calm: no useless emotion or action for its own sake; this teaches security and repose.

Economy: adaptation of means to an end without waste of energy, material, or time; this teaches us to avoid nerves, frittering and unprepared action.

Constancy: each force, each element, holding to its purpose; this teaches patience, protection, love.

Evolution: everything working towards the death of the unfit and the establishment of higher, more self-sufficing forms; this teaches civilization.

One of its lessons is hard for us to learn, for it is the lesson of modesty, or reserve. There are men so made that they look patronizingly over the mountains, the sea, the prairies, the sky, all those symbols of the infinite, and say, "How nice it is that

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these things were created especially for us!" For them! little accidents of evolution; insects of a day, bumbling over this brief globe. Nay, truly, the bird, the bat, the tree, the flower, have the same right, cause, and purpose here as men. We are, happily, come in time to enjoy this beauty that is the world. If beauty is not seen, strike your breast and cry Alack! for you are blind. True, there is no place for constant happiness, but we neglect much happiness because we will not stop to catch it, or to let it catch us. It flashes on us out of a bird-note, a glance at a hill-top, the greeting of an eye. We are so busy we may not indulge it,—busy with our temporal affairs, while eternities are everywhere in sight and hearing. Neglect not these calls. It may be a distant bell, a wind in the trees, the uprising of a childish mood or memory: if it summons to serenity and new life, no business of the race is so urgent. It is useless to seek for happiness, or even for content. But let them alone and they come to you, like women. Even heroes find that they must adapt themselves to the

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world, for the steady old planet will not go to them; by jibing with it they gain its tides and seasons. Let your walking be wise by being sympathetic.

And this should hold in your walks among men, no less than in the fields. One does not know even a work of man, let alone his heart or mind, any more than he knows a phase of nature, unless he views it sympathetically. It must be liked for more than its intrinsic beauty if it is a work of art: we must look at it as the result of a self-enjoyment, a hope, a faith. Here is a quaint old Chinese ink-pot. It may be of the Kien Lung period, or it may not: that does not matter. Through the crude decoration I see delight in the work for its own sake. There is more in this thoughtful rounding than a wish to finish the job and get the pay; there is a pride in this sweet, soft blue, fresh as the sky, and a trust that its owner is going to like it. This lump of baked clay is an individual expression: simple, rustic, innocent. So must be all art of its kind; so, to an extent, must all art be; so is the essence of the art of see-

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ing. It rests with us whether we see good or ill; but in order that we may see as much good as possible, let us be as much with, and of, what is fine, clean, patient, as we can. Don't let the dinner bell stop us from listening to the church bell, if the latter has the more health and calm for us in its sound or message. Don't neglect sweet odors, bird-songs, fair views, and fair faces because every one is urging the last novel on us. Friend, be courageous so far as to be yourself,—always yourself,—then you will be near content and one among a thousand.

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Reminiscent and Personal

A TRADITION in our family has it that a strain of savagery was brought into it by an ancestor who was stolen by Indians in the seventeenth century, and who came back to the New England settlements with a red wife. It is a tradition liked by some of us, and pleads heredity for our legs when, without warning, they carry us off to the woods, or up on hill-tops, or out at unseemly hours, to our own astonishment and protest, leaving books unread, work undone, and people waiting to scold us. When my brother and I escape to the wilderness this ancestor takes us in hand, pulls off most of our clothes, ties moccasins on our feet, sets us afloat in canoes, tips us overboard in impish glee, acquaints us with deer and other pretty citizens of the woods, makes the earth and air sweet to us, and puts

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health into our muscles. Indeed, so powerfully does he persuade my brother that he goes to his cabin in the dead of winter, fishes with Indians on northern lakes, and hangs his bare arms over clothes-lines to roast in the sun, when he has nothing else to do, hoping to get back to his original brown. Is it any wonder that this sterling old fellow has sent down his influence through generations of his successors, and that when we reach the forest we recognize our home, howbeit vaguely?

Nature! Kind, though savage protector. It never seems lonely where its spirit moves. I own to a love for it, keen and real, and find my best employments in its company. In youth I remember hugging trees in the woods, patting their bark and whispering to them; swinging in their branches, lying on the turf beneath them and chewing grass,—no better a way of devouring nature than we have in eating berries, but wilder. And in a certain village there are codgers who smile as I pass and whisper, "That's the city feller that comes up here and goes barefoot." I recall the looks of polite dis-

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may, amusement, and surprise that appeared in the faces of a carriage party when I was plodding along a White Mountain road, swinging my brogans in my hand, enjoying the warm velvet of the dust and wincing at the shards that lay hid in it. A grown-up who would walk in his naked feet was, to their minds, a forbidden and abhorrent person. Barbarians observe, with grief, that even children go shod in the country nowadays, whereas it is but thirty years since shoes were worn by them only in church and when the minister called. There were scenes of suffering at those times, and directly that the family had returned from meeting, or the clergyman had eaten the formal dinner and departed, the juvenile contingent pulled off its shoes, which were usually boots, and surged whooping into the road to wriggle its toes in the sand. Go barefoot now and then; let your feet breathe and know the taste of the earth.

Walking is not in the fashion that it might be. We sit in a saddle and walk on pedals. Excellent custom, too, but it is not walking, and we must have good roads

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or we are helpless on our bicycles. The walker is free. He has no horse, either of flesh or steel, to lodge, feed, oil, or brag about, and, be it boulevard, path, or field, he gets along just as well. Objectors to the walk always say, "But you can get on so much faster on a bicycle." Of course you can. So you can on the cars. The professional pedestrian trotting about a tan-bark ring makes six hundred miles in a week; but is that walking? No; you must walk with your eyes no less than with your feet. To get there is less important than to get what lies along the way. Some walks of a mile mean more than others of a hundred. As to the person who rides on his "wheel" with handles down, head down, back bent, legs kicking frantically, shedding perspiration, exhaling anxiety, and viewing only a cyclometer and gravel, why doesn't he buy a treadmill and work it at home? I am no enemy of the bicycle; I am as fond of mine as I am of my horse (I haven't any horse); but I believe it should be used as a pleasure and a benefit, not as a penance or a menace.

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I was ten or a dozen years old when I discovered my legs. The parental consent had been given to a salt-water swim, one morning, in company with a naughty boy of my own age, and after the swim the other boy persuaded me into tramping with him to a town where he used to live, because there we could have another swim, in fresh water, and see a friend of his who had a barrel of apples. The friend, by the way, was not at home. I was barefooted, we had no lunch, nor a penny to buy it with; we never once thought of the anxiety our disappearance would cause at home, and when we toiled up the steps of the paternal mansions, dusty, empty, horribly tired, at nine o'clock at night, we had covered between twenty and twenty-four miles of road. Only then did we learn that we had been nearly given up for drowned, and our appearance caused such apparent relief that we were allowed to have supper, and the authorities forgot to spank us.

About that time, also, I did much tramping to fife and drum, for the war was on, and no regiment marched for the front

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from the camps around Boston, or came back, without a throng of boys at its heels. Through the school-house windows we looked off on the tents dotting a hill a mile away, and the call of bugles was heard in the streets. The excitement of recruiting and the movement of battalions were incentives to activity, and the habit of walking was confirmed in many of us. Then there were the Wednesday and Saturday afternoons, sacred to theatrical matinées and tramps, for in Eastern Massachusetts the weekly holiday in schools had not been introduced, and uneasy urchins got a doubtful equivalent in the two half days named. Those were times of exploration; of haunting railroad stations to sniff at the smoke of wood-fed locomotives and dream of green places that they ran to; of playing hide-and-seek among casks and bales and wrathful citizens on the wharves, sometimes scampering up to a ship's round-top to look off at the harbor, with its appeal to imagination and adventure; of playing battle in the Revolutionary rampart overlooking Charles River; of studying pickled snakes

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and jelly-fish and inhaling the strong scientific odor in Harvard's natural history museum. Occasionally some of us would go to hear Agassiz lecture on mollusks or glaciers, for visitors were admitted to the gallery, and his simplicity of words and manner, his wise, genial face, his rapid drawings, and his absolute command of his subject fixed the attention of the youngest listener. In my little cabinet is a specimen whose counterpart Professor Hitchcock labelled, with admirable candor, "A Concretion, or Something Else." Mine I took to Agassiz and named its locality. He turned it in his hand for a moment, smiled pleasantly at the juvenile interest in such a matter, and said, in a convincing tone, "Concretion." From that moment I was loyal to the faith that Professor Agassiz knew more than any other man in the world. In the field behind the museum we would often find fragments of fossils, coral, and strange creatures of the deep, the refuse of the laboratories, which we took home with solemn joy, as if their use by the scientist had given to them a high distinction.

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A few times in my rambles I found myself in East Cambridge, and, being recognized, was most unfriendly punched; for I lived in Cambridgeport, and between the boys of those two precincts abode a feud of half a century's standing. Directly on the dismissal of the school which I attended the "Porters" assembled at the south, and the "Pointers" moved a few hundred feet toward their home in East Cambridge. Both sides then collected ammunition—stones in summer, snowballs in winter—and kept up a nice, soothing riot until hunger, darkness, parental summons, or neighborhood interference dispersed the armies. The Pointers sometimes artfully retreated for a mile, so as to lure us among their tenements, where they were sure of the aid of certain brawny, hot-blooded relatives, who pounced on us with cudgels and shovels, and turned the tide of battle. Probably not a school-boy within a mile of the dividing line but had been hurt in these almost daily conflicts. There were but two policemen on duty at a time in Cambridgeport then, and so long as too

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many windows were not broken they preferred not to see these goings-on. And to this day I have never learned the cause of the enmity, though I think it was bred in part from race dislikes, for the Porters were Americans.

At one time young America walked with a feverish energy. This was due to Edward Payson Weston. This remarkable pedestrian walked from Portland to Chicago in thirty days, and he passed through my town,—with a crowd of boys about him, be sure. By following him out on the old pike I discovered that I could walk as fast as he,—though not to Chicago. He was fresh-faced, smooth-shaven, youthful, lightly dressed, and he carried a little whip with which he slapped his own legs now and then. His march started a veritable craze for walking, and it lasted two or three years. These fads: what a corporate quality they show in the race! How we follow a leader! Yet if they are good fads it might as well be compliance as conquest, so far as results and the multitude are concerned. They beget competition, too, and

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that is healthful. If all were content to go only so fast and far as others, we should still be mollusks. Victories are not final, for we are in change.

Weston's influence was a good one in the main, though it would have been better if he had walked for some other purpose than to win a wager. Some people who had neglected their feet created bunions on them in straining for records, and rode more persistently than ever, after the fever had run its course. I prided myself on the ability to make six miles an hour, "square heel and toe," and often beat the horse cars. But all this was matter of means, not the end. Pedestrianism lost favor when it became a sport, and fagged contestants ambled around a ring in a great shed filled with the cheers and jeers and smoke of betting men.

Cigar smoke. That has a pedestrian association for me, because, lest certain deacons should discover and report the offence to my family, I learned to smoke at night in graveyards. My favorite cemetery was at the town's edge, where the

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street lights stopped and open country began. It was a long mile from home, very unpopular after dark, and bound, then, to be my property. During those qualmy evenings I cannot recall a meeting with any human creature, or any ghosts,—in fact, I remember that I did not see ghosts,—and when the moon shone on the monuments and a scent of flowers filled the air, the peace almost quieted my stomach. Perhaps it would be for the health of the world if smoking were only possible among tombs. It would certainly be for its economy. When I think it over, the place seems the fittest in the world, considering the sort of cigars I began with.

In one of my tramps with a relative we came upon a long, low building of sinister aspect in a lonely field. Ordinarily a field does not suggest loneliness, but this one did. Perhaps the structure made it seem dismal, it was so chill, so habitless, so unapproached. Its doors stood open, some of its windows had been knocked out, weeds grew against it, dirt, dust, and neglect had left their marks. A pigeon

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flew from a port in the gable as we entered. Inside it was drearier than without. Near a rusted stove was a table with drugs upon it, and a few rickety chairs. To right and left were narrow rooms with beds, the mattresses tumbled, straw bursting from their seams, cups and bottles on the floor, cobwebs in the door-way : a strange place. Why, in its abandoned state, had it not been stripped of its furniture? It came to us pleasantly that this was a pest-house. It was. That night my relative, in a considerable fright, informed me that he was beginning to have small-pox, and he was vaccinated next day, but I was not, and no harm came to either of us from the visit. Youth would be tame if it did not take risks.

There is a symbolism in the ascent of mountains that makes it an alluring performance for civilized mankind. It typifies our ambitions and aspirations ; to gain the top is a reward of endeavor, and the longer and harder the struggle the better the view ; the climb is an assertion of man's intended rule over the world, or a declara-

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tion of his love for it, according to his nature; and the victory is that of personality and will. One's grossness is etherealized; he stands nearer to the sun, in a purer air, farther from matter than in his daily life, when from his pinnacle he sees things in their larger aspect. True, some men will take a telescope with them to see the hotel where they slept last night, and the village where they will dine to-morrow; but with more climbers it is the broad effect, the fine exhilaration, the spiritualizing experience that they seek. There is a reason for high spirits in high places: the air is purer, there is more oxygen in proportion to the quantity than in the hollows where heavy gases linger, and deep breathing aerates the blood until it sparkles. Dwellers on lands three thousand feet higher than the sea have no excuse for consumption, and seldom offer any. In light air one breathes more strongly than in heavy; one has to in order to get enough; and the lungs are thus opened to their depths, leaving no effete corners for the storage of disease. People at sea-level

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do not breathe: they gasp; and millions of them keep their windows closed at that. The Colorado miner inflates his lungs about twice as far as he did when he was a New York clerk. Such breathing ought to make a superior race. *Ergo*, mankind is well off on the mountains.

I guess "Robinson Crusoe" had something to do with it, for at the age of nine or ten I had decided to be a hermit and live either in a cave on the side of a mountain, or on the summit in a two-story house containing a natural history museum and a gymnasium. In Vermont, where my summers were spent, I was overwhelmed with opportunities. Being much of the time on hill-tops, when I was neither picking berries nor swimming, but in all cases delaying dinner and storing up trouble, it was an aggravation that I could not decide which of the various views was the finest. Probably I did not propose to live on scenery, yet there was no thought of a farm, or garden, or firewood, or a water-supply, or a piano. The climbing became habitual; it extended over the Catskills,

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the White Mountains, the Rockies, and the Alps. And happy hours have been spent on eyries above the world. If only our lives could be lived on moral plateaus or pinnacles! But perhaps it would be hard to keep alive there.

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Some Sample Walks

MY first real tour afoot was made in the autumn, and ranged from Hartford, Connecticut, to a village in Northern Vermont, with side trips. The expense was nine dollars, and I was perhaps three weeks on the way, for I stopped twice for little visits to friends and relatives. It was the October of a great flood in the Connecticut, and there was exhilaration in the walk beside that river, swollen to a sea, covering miles of meadow, filling roads and streets, bearing in its onrush bridges, fences, houses, timber, from upcountry. I recall that once a cock sailed by, clinging to a pumpkin. Did he live to crow over his journey, I wonder?

I set off at nine o'clock in the morning, and my aim was to reach Holyoke that night, thirty-four miles away, as one usually walks, or more usually rides. But the

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freshet had cut off such lengths of road that I had trudged just forty miles when, at nine o'clock that night, I stumbled in at the door of my shelter. The last six or eight miles of it were hard going. Next morning I felt still worse about it, for my muscles well-nigh refused to work for an hour after I resumed my march. Climbing over Mount Tom, they were soon limbered, however, and by the second night the soreness and stiffness were nearly gone. Quaint taverns were my usual abiding-places, and the rates were cheap enough then : twenty-five cents each for meals and lodgings, and fair, both of them, though some folks do not care for pie for breakfast.

As I advanced up the river the damage worked by the flood became more obvious : many structures were torn away, miles of farm and pasture were buried under gravel, green banks were gullied and worn down, vegetation was destroyed, roads and railroads had suffered untold injury. And as we cut away our forests, destroying the vegetable mould, that sponge which holds the rain and melting snow, these freshets

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will increase, while the summers will grow more dry. Look at the fall of Spain that followed the destruction of her woods, and let us refrain from doing as she did.

Ah, but those mornings of crystal and gold, with a tingle of frost in the air, a glory in the oaks and maples, some last notes of departing birds heard across the fields! Paradise was on earth again, at sunrise. Swinging up the road, stick in hand, meeting none but simple, kindly people, whistling in exuberance of spirit,—what consummate joy there is in liberty! The sweet, historic old towns of Massachusetts, with their elm-shaded avenues: it is a happy way through them. Brattleboro': I recall it less as an abiding-place for human beings than as a splendor of autumn color and a place where chestnuts were plenty. Bellows Falls: there are real falls in flood-time, and they have great anger among the rocks. Then I turned to the northwest, to an early haunt among the mountains.

One never recovers from the glamour of youth, in so far as it pertains to natural

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objects. The men who were giants in the boy's imagination dwindle under the experience and criticism of advancing years, until he finds them to have been a good deal like himself, plus a trifle more of energy or facility in one direction or another; the splendid air-castles he was to occupy shrink and shrink until they assume the meanly comfortable aspect of a two-and-a-half-story house on a street not too shabby; the feats in war, discovery, statesmanship, and circus-riding to which fate was going to call him are all being done by somebody else by the time he is forty; but nature is ever kindly, and when he goes to the home of his youth he looks on it with the eye of childhood. World-hardened, indeed, must that man be who returns to the scenes of his heartiest and most innocent pleasures without feeling some echo of them in his heart. I brood on the beauty of a stream in which I have bathed and paddled at odd times from babyhood,—Black River.

There are several Black Rivers. It oddly happens that each of my grand-

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fathers lived beside one, though they were in different States. The one I speak of now is so small that not one in twenty of those who pass it in a railroad train pay any regard to it. It rises east from Rutland, and in a gracefully tortuous course of forty miles or so reaches the Connecticut. Swollen though it is by accessions from brooks, its volume is at no point imposing. Perhaps its average breadth is thirty feet, and while one can wade across it in some places, there is no lack of swimming-holes that the boys will point out to you, nor of still pools near painted bridges where suckers may be snared. Most of the time it is a rapid little river, for it falls a thousand feet, and its dark color is emphasized by rings and ribbons of foam. When it rains long, or the snow melts, look out for it, because then it rises two or three fathoms at a leap, and whatever is in the way of it must go, unless it is founded on a rock.

Its sunny ovals, called Plymouth ponds, were talked about years ago, when gold was found there, as it is found there now;

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but the stuff costs so much to extract that when the laborers are paid and the expense is set aside of separating it from the gravel, the owner is lucky if he has enough left to buy a cigar. Work has, therefore, been fitful, and if anybody wants a gold-mine he can probably get one cheap. No doubt he can get more out of it than some investors have made in Western mines. Were the sands along Black River as carefully searched as they would be if it ran out of the Rockies or Sierras, the precious metal might be found in paying quantities. The stream passes Ludlow, high and cool, environed with mountains, and does some turning of mill-wheels. It was a good deal of a river once, and before the barriers broke down to open its present channel it was ponded just below here.

Tramp the shaded road that follows it to Proctorsville, and in that lovely intervale you stand in the bed of an ancient lake. Geologist or not, you will look to see where, ages ago, the lake drained off. This outlet, known as the Gulf, is notably like the notches of the White Mountains and cloves

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of the Catskills. On either side the hills sweep upward, almost vertically, but their grimness is concealed in a copious forest growth. Old landslides have narrowed the valley between them, so that there is room for a road and a rill and nothing more; and the gloom, the wildness, the silence of the place, are impressive, even though one has seen the Alps, the Rockies, and the Selkirks. There is no house, nor fence, nor field, and travellers go through it swerving neither to right nor left for a matter of two miles. Beside the rill ferns grow to a man's height.

Returning to the present river, we dine at the old Eagle tavern, its former bar still a loitering-place for village worthies, and a faint odor prevailing through it of generations of pipes. As its name denotes, Proctorsville was settled by the Proctors, ancestors of Redfield Proctor, governor of Vermont, senator, secretary of war, and owner of Rutland marble-quarries. The little house where he was born stands in the shaded village street, and another home of the family is on the topmost of three

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gigantic steps,—terraces that mark subsidences in the lake. The founder of the village, having put up his house, brought his family to it on a bitter day of winter, and on opening the door he found that snow had drifted through a broken window. All was icy and comfortless, and he turned as if to leave; but his wife grasped a broom and attacked the drift, saying, "Please God, we will stay." And they stayed. Another family, the Fletchers, likewise furnished a governor and a lieutenant-governor to the State, and gave a library to the township. From this hamlet have also come a judge, a general, fifty soldiers of the Union army, two or three millionaires, several clergymen, physicians, and lawyers, a State geologist, and sundry prosperous merchants.

In Cavendish, the pretty village below, Black River enters on the stormiest part of its career. Cavendish Gorge is a wild place, with walls sometimes vertical, sometimes overhanging, choked with masses that have cracked and fallen in flood-time, drift timber, in niches twenty feet above the water,

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marking the spring risings. The spirit of the place is stern, yet allayed by accidents of loveliness. Moss grows rich in the moist places, and ledges of decaying mica-schist seam the ground with trails of powdered silver. Here is the customary Lovers' Leap, and it has its story. A man slipped at the brink while prying stone for a fence and went whirling into the depths. Cautiously his friend crept to the edge and looked over. "Are you hurt?" he called. The fallen one had crept upon a slanting rock out of the flood. He passed his hands cautiously over his legs, then began to explore his pockets more and more rapidly, a look of alarm growing on his face. At last he looked up and replied in a grieved, deliberate tone, "I ain't hurt much, but I'll be durned if I haven't lost my jack-knife."

Singular features of these falls are the pot-holes in the banks. These vary from rotundas twenty feet across to little wells that might almost be mistaken for drill-holes. The former course of the river is indicated in these carvings fifty feet above

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where it now runs. One has been roofed by a fallen slab of rock, weighing hundreds of tons, that has transformed it into a cave. Fine moss in this cavern is hardly visible as you look toward the light from within, but it shines like a cat's eye when you see it in the other direction.

As the open country is gained below the falls, Mount Ascutney comes into sight at the eastward: a stately pyramid cut from the rest of the Green Mountains by miles of rolling country; a lonely, forest-wrapped peak that drops its upset image into the Connecticut. It was a cold afternoon when I climbed Ascutney. Ice draped the rocks and trees near the top, but bear-tracks on the path showed that the woods had not lost their life. On the summit were several surveyors, gloved and overcoated, who were watching the flicker of a mirror, tiny sun-sparks, away over on Mount Kearsarge. This height, of something over three thousand three hundred feet, is so isolated that it commands a glorious view: the Connecticut below, Windsor snuggling on its shore, the Green

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Mountains hulking and napping along the west, the arctic White Mountains in the northeast.

Much cider was a-making, too, about that time, and you could have your fill for the asking, either in a glass or absorbed through straws inserted at the bung-hole, with refection of butternuts in the breathing spaces: food and nectar of the gods. Presently snow came, and the Vermont roads took on their six months' iniquity of rut and mud. I had no overcoat. My shoes, strong though they were, well pegged, with rubber soles beneath the leather,—a futile device for long walks,—began to leak. I climbed and loitered no longer, but made a dash, and reached my journey's end as winter swooped upon the country.

There is no object of unusual interest in this tramp. My detail is intended as a hint that it is well to take by-roads. The main roads are populous, expensive, hackneyed. Service is not free nor friendly, but measured by what may be got out of you. Town crowds, town pleasures, town manners, town cooking, and worse than

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town prices confront you everywhere. In the back country a more Arcadian condition exists. If it is people you wish to see, you will find them more original and transparent in the unspoiled hills than among the hives of summer boarders and the stylish hotels where honest country folk are looked upon with amusement or condescension.

If there is little wealth among the farmers, there is little poverty; if there is narrow politics, there is never anarchy, and no socialism other than the practical one of mutual help and interest. Wages and gains are small, and there is an anxiety over pennies that surprises townsmen, who are careless with their gettings. This thrift is taught and practised and respected, but standards of wealth are different from those in town. From a village street, one evening, I saw an old man in a little office, a sort of bay-window, attached to his house. He was bent over some papers and was scratching earnestly with his pen, his work lighted by one of those dismal oil lamps that are peculiar to rural districts. A

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farmer with whom I was talking followed my look and explained, "That's old B——. They made him probate clerk. He's rich. Why, I've known that feller to go into that cubby-hole after supper and make two dollars 'fore he went to bed." The earnestness of the statement was convincing: the two dollars were wealth.

In these villages, too, you meet the shady lawyer. If he were taxed with sharp practice, he would probably ask how he was expected to live in such a place if he didn't make trouble. Does a cow stray into a garden and eat of the fruits thereof; is a boy bitten by a dog; has a horse kicked down a gate or nibbled a shade tree; has a man spoken or written ill of a neighbor; is the store-keeper in arrears for that last lot of butter, or a customer slow in paying the store-keeper for the last ten pounds of it; it is the lawyer who is first to hear of it and advise a suit. Are the relations between two people strained, he will try to strain them farther. Is any simple transaction to be concluded, he will surround it with perils and mys-

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teries, because he wants to draw up papers about it. The lawyer in one New England village—you never find more than one, and the neighbors often agree that he is one too many—used to profit when he could by presenting bills for imaginary services given to dead people. The heirs or executors of the deceased would have no proof or knowledge of such services, but there was the bill, and the matter was usually compromised. In one case a claim for one hundred dollars was sent to the son of a well-to-do villager almost before the latter was in his coffin. The son said to the lawyer, "Look here, Chipman; you never did any work for my father. He wouldn't have hired you, anyway, if he'd wanted a lawyer. I won't pay the bill. But, rather than be annoyed by you, I'll give you five dollars."

"All right," replied the conscientious attorney, and he receipted the paper.

There was a retired stage-driver who had quite a little bank deposit, and who held this lawyer's post-mortem accounts in fear. "I hope," he grumbled, "that when it's

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time to die, the Lord'll let Chipman go fifteen minutes before I do." He had his wish.

None the less, you find these fellows in the front pews in church, because in a rural community one gains social standing from a deaconship and business from social standing. They are pious men, don't play poker, are temperate, swear only in whispers, in the wood-shed, and would scorn to steal openly. We shall find, however, that genial faults are better liked than austere virtues, that by the same token straight conduct is admired, that a little obvious benefit in a farm holds more satisfaction than a promise of greater in a court. It is a queer freak of my fancy that puts romance into the dry, dull law. Perhaps it came from reading "Bleak House;" perhaps the inscrutability of lawyers stirs the imagination; they seem to carry something ideal in their function and behavior—so long as they keep silence. Ideals best prosper in embodiment, and we do not have to show our emotions. We are suspicious of those who

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clamor on the mourners' bench, especially the Chipmans. Carlyle lived a tragedy in feeling, because he had crippled his digestion with a Scotch pipe, and life and thought are one; whereas other mortals hold their peace and find life pleasanter for a salt of imaginative romance; and there is more of this in the country than people admit. The books and papers most read there prove it. This romance of sentiment belongs to most of us, and is a different matter from romance of experience, for that means hardship, risk, poverty, labor, wide swings between success and failure, and is better avoided by bald persons of forty-five and maidens who wear corkscrew curls. They know it worth while to plod in this work-a-day world, for sake of the ease and of immunity from love-scrapes and changing the course of empires, and they cultivate a hard sense that makes bad business for attorneys-at-law. In these rustic microcosms we find that some human qualities take on the small measure of the village, that the people are poor and a trifle mean. But

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they regulate their own affairs justly. The rule of the poor is right. It is the rule of ignorance that is wrong.

Speaking of ignorance, it is one of the things that make it hard to walk in certain parts of the country which are naturally attractive. There are the Big Smoky Mountains, for example. What a glorious region for a tramp! But a journey through them is like a journey in Alaska or Bolivia. The roads are vile; often there is nothing but a trail between the "settlemints,"—a trail on which you meet shaggy men riding on mules and oxen with a rifle and meal-bag in front of them; sallow, barefooted women, with homespun or calico skirts flapping against their legs, and their faces half-concealed in grave cloths and sun-bonnets; plump girls smoking pipes and boys carrying jugs of moonshine whiskey. The houses are cabins, public accommodations are few, cooking is a wallow of melted pork, and strangers are "suspicioned" as revenue officers. The grandeur of the hills and the beauty of the rivers have not lifted or broadened these people.

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They are religious, but they have few schools.

Out in the Rockies you find a race of men sharper, wiser, heartier, but it is new land, and they have no time to build roads, except to the mines. When they have driveways half as good as their railways, when they emulate Switzerland in the creation of comforts and conveniences to draw the public, their mountain belt will be a pedestrian's paradise.

The opposite of these mountain countries we find in the plains and prairies, strong and new in their populace, partaking of their bigness and freedom, but still behind the age in their streets and turnpikes, which are often sloughs of despond. If we want to walk in a flat country we shall do better to take the East. Cape Cod has an isolated character of its own, but, like the rest of it, the roads are sand. Long Island has level highways of macadam,—the joy of bicyclers. Except at its eastern end, the scenery is commonplace, though pleasant. Its older towns bear names bestowed by the Montauk and

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Shinnecock Indians, and when you hear them you guess that their speech grew out of the croaking of frogs and piping of tree-toads. Listen: Quogue, Cutchogue, Patchogue, Ponquogue, Aquebogue, Ronkonkoma, Speonk, Sagg, Setauket, Islip, Yaphank, Moriches, Amagansett, Manhasset, Commack, Peconic, Mattituck, Mineola, Massapequa, Noyack,—isn't it like the evening chorus in the marshes? And they have frogs there, too. But, oh, they have one monster more awful in imagination and reality than frogs, than even the batrachian who snaps that double bass string so loudly as we pass his haunt, and that is the mosquito.

I have travelled with my head in a bag of netting, my coat buttoned to my ears, my hands flailing the clouds that snarled about me, but with little avail; yet in a tramp to Montauk Point I passed the dreaded Napeague beach in safety by wading in the sea. The pests hovered at the edge of the water, but seldom ventured beyond the shore. Climbing, then, to the windy moors of the point, that crumble to

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the ocean in bluffs of clay and gravel, I left the mosquitoes behind me.

Our Catskills are a delightful region for the walker, after the summer idlers have gone. Their romantic cloves are never finer than when draped in the red and orange of October, when mists surge, volcanic, from the peaks, when the Hudson valley becomes a floor of cloud, along whose surface, as across ice-filled waters of the Arctics, you look for a hundred miles. The Adirondacks are more elusive, and many are misled by the careless spreading of that term across the dull, rolling country to the west of the mountains where rich men have bought immense estates, and where people go to shed the blood of harmless animals. Noble scenery and many natural delights are to be had in parts of the Adirondacks, while poor roads, crowded inns, extortionate prices, and restricted views enable one to leave some other parts of them without a pang.

Until recently the White Mountains have not had the popularity they deserve, except among New Englanders, who have

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celebrated their glories for decades. They lie in easy folds for the walker, since one can see the best of them without that return upon his track which to the hurried is a disadvantage. Take boat over Lake Winnepesaukee (excuse the sensible spelling; they usually write it, as they do not pronounce it, Winnepeseogee) to Centre Harbor, climb Red Hill, cross into the Pemigewasset Valley, go northward, visiting the Pool, the Flume, Echo Lake, the Profile, scaling Bald Mountain and perhaps Mount Lafayette, and passing on in the shadow of vast precipices. Now turn east through farms and burned woods, and ascend the valley of the Ammonoosuc. Go over to Jefferson and ascend Mount Starr King. Cross a shoulder of the Presidential range and go up Mount Washington, by carriage road if you are portly, or by Tuckerman's Ravine if you are lithe and delight in difficulties. Then descend by the Crawford bridle-path, a glorious highway, a mile up in the air, along the tops of the range, and so into the deep and craggy Notch, viewing it for a memorable

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hour from the top of Mount Willard. After this follow the Saco to North Conway, where you end your tour with a lovely backward vista. Rudely explained, your walk has extended around three sides of a square.

This programme is given because it illustrates a good principle to follow in one's tramps,—that, namely, of securing a constant crescendo of beauty and interest. In this case Mount Washington is reserved until almost the last, because it is greatest. Speaking for myself, I find that it also heightens the enjoyment of a pedestrian or bicycle tour if every day sends me farther from my starting-point. The excitement has oozed when I face about and start for home, so that it is usually more tolerable to return by rail. Perhaps the reason for this is that, as I usually go northward, the return means a descent into heat and humidity. Thoreau tells of an impulse that seized him always to go southwest. Do most of the Ishmaelites feel this migratory instinct? I do, but it sends me west and north, never south. Perhaps if I were

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in the west, and felt the continent to conquer, I should be impelled eastward; but at present I follow empire, and set my face toward the setting sun, toward untravelled spaces where the snow flies early.

One jaunt took me through the woods about Walden Pond,—region hallowed to tramps for all time. And they were there: Parched Perkins and Needham Neverwork had bathed in Thoreau's lake, thereby violating their traditions, and were even shaving themselves. Is there something in this region that stimulates the fancy as other spots of earth do not, or do memories of the Concord great turn our thoughts from accustomed channels? The latter, doubtless, for we find in the outer world what we have in ourselves, and we are thinking "Walden" when we visit the water that the book was named for. After losing myself delightedly among the woods, I met Ralph Waldo Emerson, and rode into Boston with him. A business episode of a previous year was my excuse for an introduction. Doubtless I bored the philosopher, yet no sooner had I said, "I have

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just been on a pilgrimage to Thoreau's stamping-ground," than he brightened and beamed in the friendliest way and began to chat without restraint.

Absolutely the simplest being, in his talk and manner, that ever I met was Emerson. The sweetness and purity of his nature expressed themselves in his smile. He showed from the car window where Thoreau's hut had stood. "More like an Indian," said he, speaking of the hermit, "than a white man. He was free and strange. If he found the sky clear when he got up in the morning he might say, 'This is a good day to go to the White Mountains,' and shut his door and trudge off to the White Mountains just as he would go to the spring for a drink. He used to come up through the woods and call on us without ceremony, and help himself to any axe or spade or bucket that he found on my premises, and would keep it until he was through with it." A reminiscent twinkle here. Thoreau was neither romantic nor misanthropic, nor was he unhappy. His nature had nothing

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of the morbid or unhealthful, his sympathies were fresh and keen, he was content to be alone, yet he delighted in tramps and boating trips with his college chums, and would walk to Worcester to ask his friend, Mr. Blake, to take a jaunt up-country to the mountains. For prying strangers and supercilious people he lacked courtesy. He disliked pretence of all kinds, but restrained himself to reproof of wrong and folly rather than enlarged his energies as an active reformer. A creature of impulses, he was still a hard worker, after his fashion, wrote much in his cabin, and left a chest of manuscript, but made next to nothing by his writing. He did get a job of surveying, now and then, and gave an occasional lecture, and the few dollars that he made in that way seemed to satisfy him. Thus Mr. Emerson.

The sage was at that time beginning to lose his memory, and when I asked him the name of a mountain seen in the west from Concord he shook his head slowly with a shade of sadness in his look. "Ah," said he, "you must not expect me to

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remember names of mountains, for it's as much as I can do to remember the names of men."

"Is it Wachusett?" I asked.

"Ah, that is it," he answered, with a smile, as if he were glad to recover it. During the trip I furtively watched his face and wondered at the serenity that made it beautiful. It was suffused by a peace that seemed not to have known reverse. Some women entered the car. He arose to give his seat to them. I insisted that he should remain, and that one of them should take mine, and standing at the door I could but remark the absorbed yet placid air he wore as he looked through the window at the flying landscape. His eyes had great lucency, softness, and benignity. Two ruddy farmers standing in the aisle were discussing Schopenhauer. Truly this was Concord. Arrived in Boston, I recalled a phrase in one of Emerson's essays in disparagement of handshaking, so that I was for bowing a farewell and going about my affairs, but he smiled again in his clear and winning way and held out his hand,

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which I clasped with the fervor of a disciple. Something of the composure, but much of the sunshine of summer abode in that wonderful man.

One warm afternoon found me in the quaint, rambling house of Joseph Jefferson in Hohokus, New Jersey. This comedian, most widely beloved of actors, drops the manner of the stage as entirely in his home as he does on the stage, and is the same gentle, child-like man as "Joe" Jefferson that he is as Rip Van Winkle,—a character that will never have another such exponent. He has even a tang of the Van Winkle speech, so long he has talked it. At that time he had a studio in his barn, where he used to paint landscapes as a recreation, and there he received me in his frank and hearty manner, appearing to be as tickled as a boy when I praised the picture of a Louisiana bayou on his easel. His rules in pictorial art are worth repeating: "strength without blackness, form without hardness, suggestion without vagueness, delicacy without weakness;" but they are rules that, consciously or

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otherwise, affect his acting, too. It is easy to understand that such a man would enjoy a tempered cheerfulness, even though he confesses to a vein of melancholy, such as you always find conjoined to humor. Nature he loves, but solitude or gloom frightens him. Poe and Chopin he abjures, but Corot and Mendelssohn he admires. Music moves him deeply, and he acts better if his orchestra is in good form. He thought of having his daughter play for him while he painted, to stimulate his imagination, for all of his pictures are composed; none copied. Color, even on a palette, delights him, especially golden browns and purples. He criticised the precisians in painting, the Gérômes and Bouguereaus, and said that for him landscape was the highest form of art, "the fruits of our best thoughts. It is the last to come, and as men do not go backward, this proves it the best. Until the time of Turner and Constable men saw only each other, but now they are beginning to understand that woods, fields, skies, and rivers typify or express our purest senti-

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ments. There must be a suggestion in the landscape or it is not art. My painting has been useful to me in my acting, and my acting helps to improve my pictures by keeping my imagination fresh and active. If the spring gets out of that, a man's work becomes forced, although there must be mental restraint; the mind must sit in judgment on the fancy when necessary. A man is a crank when his imagination runs away with him. Whatever success I have had comes from self-criticism, and a wish to profit by the criticism of others. In acting it is not so easy to change as it is in some other things, for that is largely a matter of temperament, and one cannot change his nature. In all the arts we must be true and direct when it comes to expression. In poetry, when a writer enunciates a great truth, he tells it in the fewest and shortest words. Shakespeare traces the dust of Alexander till he finds it stopping a bung-hole. If Longfellow had had to put 'bung-hole' into a poem where would he have been? In Shakespeare the thought comes as straight

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as a bullet." Surrounded by his family, his friends, his pets, his porcelains, his pictures, and his memories, with breezes bearing perfume and bird-songs in at his windows, this man who has swayed a people to tears and laughter owned to being happy.

In a jog through the Berkshires, splendent in October, I turned a little aside from my path to see the Shakers, and was heartily won to them. Such plain, righteous folk it is a comfort to meet, "monks and nuns without bolts and bars," as the godly Elder Evans described them, and, he might have added, without coldness or acerbity. Though the men and women live apart, they are brothers and sisters and their interests are common. It was Sunday when I entered Mount Lebanon and heard the joyous chant and dance as I passed the meeting-house. It was too late to attend service, so I walked on to the house of the North family, and was presently in talk with Elder Frederick Evans and "Brother" Daniel Fraser, the latter a cheery, ruddy man of nearly ninety, who

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took me about to see the perfect order and cleanliness of the farm, the barns, and the buildings. These two men had lived away from "the world" for thirty or forty years, they had forsworn many of its alleged pleasures, but their lives were crowned with content, they were alert and strong in body and mind; their kindliness and frankness took hold on me. While their talk was earnest, it was humorous, genial, and full of sense. Shakers are vegetarians, but the fact that they are also bright, that they sing and whistle a good deal, that they do hard, steady work and enjoy exceptional health, seems to show that the eating of flesh is a custom rather than a need. Cancer, they tell me, is unknown among them, and their lives exceed our average by a decade. Daniel Fraser had eaten no meat in thirty years, and had also abstained from eggs, fish, milk, butter, cheese, lard, spirits, tea, coffee, tobacco, spices, saleratus, and soda. Farinaceous foods, fruit, vegetables, and water were all he needed. I testify to a remarkable variety and toothsomeness in their fare,

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and if a new-comer feels a need of meat or fish or eggs or tea or coffee, he can have them. This absence of hard and fast rules is a thing that draws one to the Shakers. I had stopped for lunch in Hancock, another Shaker village, and had confronted this: cold beef, white and brown bread, butter, rice, baked beans, potato cakes, pickles, blackberry jam, ditto pie, apple pie, milk, cream cheese, pot cheese, cake, and doughnuts. Bill, twenty-five cents. Only once did money go farther for me. It was in the Catskills in their innocent days, and I roused a native out of a nap to get me a snack. He produced a wonderful quantity of nutriment, and when I had destroyed it and called for the reckoning, he said he guessed he would have to tax me about thirteen cents.

Shakers go plainly dressed. They frown on ornament, although they cultivate flowers, and their living rooms are comfortable and cheery. Cats and canaries are the only animals to be seen about the houses, the cats being tolerated because they catch mice; but the people do no

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killing, unless it might be of rattlesnakes, vermin, or mad dogs. Most of the members of the community are in middle life or beyond it, and to some of them Mount Lebanon is a refuge from chills and anxieties. They are owners of one of the finest farms in the world, they have no dread as to the future, no fear for the present, their material needs are met, and their associates are men and women who are strangely free from vice, sordidness, and sin. They are spiritualists, believing that the souls of the dead continue their activities on earth, and Elder Evans solemnly assured me that John the Baptist had been seen leading his people in the dance,—that peculiar ceremony whereby is typified the shaking out of carnal things.

This was the only statement made in our long talk that savored of oddity, for the elder was broad-minded and practical. Said he, "We do not take the Bible literally, for much of it is allegorical. The true Bible is all Bibles,—ours, the Koran, the Talmud, the Bhagvat, the Zend Avesta, the moral guides of all people. Our Bible

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is a book of the morals, philosophy, history, and pretty bad science of the Jews. Our souls used to be tired within us when the world's people came here and argued about three gods in one, and the atonement and those orthodox ideas. Shakerism combines science, religion, and inspiration. It is practical religion. We live as families, each member doing his share of work, all mutually helpful, we own all things in common, we discountenance war, we do not go to law, we do not vote, we are celibates, we use only 'yea' and 'nay' for affirmative and negative" (they pronounce them "yee" and "nee"), "we aim to be just, we do not swear, and we keep clean. We believe in marriage, but only for the continuance of the race. All men cannot be Shakers, nor do we wish them to be. With marriage came private property, with that came wrangling, and with wrangling came war. Our communism is that of Moses. Private property in land—a pernicious thing—is new. It is outrageous that one man should absorb thousands of acres to himself. As

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to the eating of flesh, it is needless, for all its ingredients are in the soil. Beef contains nothing that we do not find in vegetables. But animals have a right to their lives, and I object to the murder."

The little burial-ground to which the mortal relics of these people are committed is almost unmarked, and Daniel Fraser asked the use of gravestones, for of what honor and value was dust? The lives and deeds of men were not buried. There are in this village a serenity, prosperity, and health that to the tired man of cities ought to be delightful. Do the Shakers prove communism possible, except on a religious basis? Industrial and intellectual brotherhoods have not thriven as they should. Will men be as just and work as hard for each other's material welfare as they will to reach heaven? I do not know. I can only say that as communists the Shakers have proved their right to be. Said Elder Evans,—since gathered to the faithful,—"This is an earthly heaven. I could live here forever."

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Partly Practical

SHOULD any reader care to make a journey afoot, I commend to him these considerations: have a general plan, but do not feel obliged to follow it slavishly, for chance brings benefits that are worth going aside to gain, while it interposes obstacles that it is wasteful and foolish to surmount. Don't climb a mountain or a monument in a fog, or visit a waterfall when August heats have dried it up, for the reason that your schedule calls for these things. Prepare yourself ahead with a few facts about roads, taverns, show places, distances, history, legends, and if you have a scientific bent, geography, geology, mineralogy, and botany. Every mile of the walk will then have an interest denied to the man who is intent on covering space or seeing the hackneyed sights. Cautions are offered a-plenty. A will tell you that there must

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be no long walk, no starting directly after meals, no delay in getting them, no rising before a certain hour, no staying up after a given time; B holds that there should be no walking at noon, no bathing, no this, that, and the other; but people who govern their conduct with thirty-nine don'ts ought to coddle themselves at home. The best way is to walk when you please, go until you are tired, eat what you like, as much as you like, when you like, and drink much or little, being timid only as to water, which, in the country, is liable to cesspool and barn-yard taints. Drink from springs rather than wells and pools, and take milk or cider when it is offered. It is a suggestive fact that city people who succumb to typhoid diseases in the fall have generally been drinking country water in the summer. Your moss-covered bucket is a rare conserver of microbes.

The tour afoot, to be successful, must be individual, and you may count on frictions and disagreements if you go in company. As a relaxation the tour with a party is most efficient. The pace is then accommo-

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dated to the slowest man, the weak or fat one orders the wayside halts, the hungriest fixes and prolongs the hours for meals; so the party is not likely to overwork. There is always good nature, chaffing, story-telling, singing, and skylarking, with reading aloud or card-playing in the evening, and a trip like that will be pleasant in the realization, pleasant in the memory. If there is a crank or obstructionist among you, he drops out or submits to the wishes of the rest.

Ah, but suppose you are the crank? Then flock by yourself. Really, there is not half so much to fear in walking alone, or being alone, as the untried think there is. The social habit has such a grip on most of us that the idea of separation from our kind carries with it a sort of terror. If you have inner resources, however, you find pretty good company without any one to talk to. As you are sure to meet people at the taverns and other stopping-places, the hours of solitude on the highway are hours of self-knowledge and self-development; you will laugh less than in company,

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but will learn more; you will study faces less, but will gain truer notions of the importance and beauty of the hills, woods, waters, and wild life of the earth and air. If some community of interest unites a party, if all are sketchers, photographers, entomologists, or footpads, it will be happier than if each member is pulling in a different way from the others; but when a man is his own party he can stop, go, sleep, dawdle, or hurry as the whim or the need commands him.

And if one really intends to take a pedestrian tour he might as well give over the hope of company, for in ninety-nine cases in a hundred he will find that somebody has a lame leg or an engagement, and the rest are for putting it off until he is ready; then, when he is prepared, another one is so pressed by business that he asks a farther postponement; another comes around with some ridiculous excuse about getting married, and so the season is wasted, and the affair goes over until next year,—in other words, forever. But though the party of from three to a dozen

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is difficult, it is not so hard to find one companion. If only the women would stop wearing corsets and tight shoes and carrying inordinate quantities of dry goods, how much health and pleasure they would gain from walks with their husbands and brothers! In England I have met mother, father, daughters, and sons trudging along the road together; the men, to be sure, a little unhappy, as they had to carry packs for the women, but bearing up with smiling fortitude. Agreement between two is kept by little compromises and sacrifices, whereas the difficulty of agreement among more than two grows in geometrical ratio as each new member is added to the party. In a family outing it is different: the daughter orders that.

After the trip is arranged comes the question of outfit, and here a rigid economy of weight must be practised. No blacking, no linen shirts, no frills, furbelows, or superfluities. Supplies must be cut down to the last ounce, always remembering that they weigh four times as much at night as in the morning. The knapsack was once

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a popular carrier, but it is obsolete now, except among the military and on excursions into remote districts where food or camp equipage must be carried. It is awkward to reach, it tends to make the wearer stoop, the straps bind and cut the shoulders, it is conspicuous, and some rustics will suppose it to be a peddler's pack. Best of luggage-holders is a little leather satchel with a strap by which to hang it, and when the left shoulder tires it can be shifted to the right. It can be easily and quickly opened, draws no attention, is not clumsy; in trains and boats it can be tossed aside and replaced in an instant; it need be only half as large as a knapsack, for one's actual wants are few. In several trips, across Canada, through the West and South, and in Europe, this was my equipment: in my satchel I had a light rubber coat, night-gown, shirt, handkerchief, collar, buttons, comb, tooth-brush, telescope cup, postal cards, map, and guide-book. In my pockets were a knife, watch, pencil, fountain pen, handkerchief, tooth-picks, note-book, sketch-book, novel, and

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money,—the latter if I was lucky. Add a stick, more for company than support, and you are independent, so long as you get your meals. For dress, just old clothes with a soft hat or cap, easy, broad-soled shoes. Ready: go.

Of course, if there is a party there is a certain advantage in the matter of adjusting freight, since it may be divided. For example, one man will carry the guide-book, only one being needed for all; another will take a clothes-brush; another a jar of vaseline, useful to relieve chafing; another, who has gained the confidence of his partners, is the guardian of a flask; and one carries shaving materials. While I think of it, let me add that if you do succeed in making up a party, have it understood at the outset that each pays his way. Nothing leads more easily to extravagance and regret than the selfishness that assumes on its own account the regulation of expenses for the company, or the careless good nature that would incur penury by buying cigars and paying car fare for every one. If it is agreed to

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share evenly, one man may act as treasurer and you can have a weekly or nightly settlement.

Don't be separated from your tooth-brush and overcoat. Keep them with you, as you do your watch and money. A company of four, myself one, wishing to make the ascent of Mount Washington by way of Tuckerman's Ravine, resolved to send our satchels to the summit in the stage that climbed up daily by the wagon road. On reaching the hotel at the top we found that the stage-driver had forgotten to leave them, and had taken them to the foot of the mountain again. After much telephoning it was understood that they were to be sent, express, to the Willey House. Next day we descended, by the bridle-path, to that inn, and found that they had not been left. More telephoning, telegraphing, consultations with agents; finally, they were traced to the Crawford House. We returned in our tracks and recovered them. As my own pack weighed but four or five pounds, it was absurd to have it carried in a wagon. Express com-

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panies can do a service, however, if you wish to keep supplied with fresh linen, or if you want to shine in evening dress at the hotels, or if it is needful to your pleasure to destroy life with guns; for a heavy valise or trunk may be sent ahead, and will await you at your hotel, if it is not in some other man's hotel, or if you can get into your own in the busy season. This service is expensive, uncertain, and causes delays, for in regions of much resort, where the means of handling crowds are still insufficient, baggage bides its time until its owners are lodged, and annoying swindles are permitted by hotel and livery men and express companies.

One of the small frauds that need not fret the walker is the hotel 'bus, that waits for guests at railway stations. Nothing is said about fare, and it is supposed that the landlord who demands four dollars a day for a cot in a corridor and three boarding-house meals will at least collect his victims; but, no: the driver assesses twenty-five to fifty cents all around. This scheme is sometimes practised: a free coach for the

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Aramoosha House is at the station. The house is eight minutes' walk from there. The driver calls, "Get right in, gents. Take you right up. No charge." You get in and ride to the hotel, where the clerk informs you, what the driver knew, that there is not a room, a bed, a cot, or a billiard-table left unclaimed. Then the "free coach" driver pounces on you and wants half a dollar, because you are going to another house.

By all means accept the invitations you will get from farmers driving on the highway, unless you have scruples against riding, or a pride of feet. Our country people have much native kindness, and when they offer a seat they mean it, and would be surprised, if not offended, by a tender of payment. Once in England I had a lift, though the wagoner took a tip. On the Continent I not only had no offer of a ride, but I never heard of any stranger who did. It is not customary there to do such things. A change to a carriage for a couple of miles gives rest and diversity to the day's programme, and a swapping

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of ideas with a shrewd Yankee will be agreeable to both of you.

Now, as to washing. You will swim and bathe often, and shake and brush your clothing every night; yet walking is a dusty business, and you will require frequent service from a laundry. Some hotels are so well provided that you can have clothing washed, dried, and ironed overnight, and ready when you rise. In other places where you are to stop for a day or two, the work can be done better at more leisure. You can wash small articles, like handkerchiefs and stockings, at a pinch, yourself. Stockings wear out so quickly that it is not a bad idea to take about three pairs of your oldest, and discard them as they become ragged. Or, buy a pair at a time of the cheapest kind and throw them away as they are used up. Little jobs, like mending, will usually be done for you by servants at the inns; for it is an odd fact, in respect of hotels, that the more you pay the less you get. There are caravansaries in New York in which ten dollars a day is the charge for a room,

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without board. You want a fire in the grate? Fifty cents. A servant to carry a message? Fifty cents. A lamp to read by? Impossible. Ice-water? Ten cents. A hot-water bag at your feet? Ten cents, and also buy the bag. Information? Ask a policeman. But in a country tavern, where the charge is five dollars a week with board, you can ask the landlady to sew on a button, borrow the landlord's slippers or the hostler's fishing-pole, call for hot water to shave with, have a fire in your room, get a parcel taken to the station, have your mail brought in, have a snack between meals, and there is no thought of extra charge.

In Europe, where I flew exceeding light of baggage, I resorted to this expedient to save the carriage of an extra shirt: my night-gown was pierced for collar buttons, and I carried a detachable collar and scarf. On the day when my shirt was in the wash nobody who may have seen me in the galleries or museums knew that I was so nearly ready for bed. I am aware that these hints will seem funny to people who

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have time and wealth a-plenty, but I address myself just now to poor folks. Naturally, I had a base of supplies, warm clothes for the voyage, and all that, but it was in London. I commend this practice of securing a base. Here, it will be your home; abroad, it will be the capital of the country you are visiting, or, if your trip is hasty, London. The modern agency will keep your steamer-chair and trunk (great humbug having to pay for a seat when you pay one hundred dollars for your passage, and greater humbug having to give a sovereign to a waiter who would have brought your meals to you if you had wanted any), will hold or forward letters, receive books, photographs, and souvenirs that you must send back to yourself when your pockets are full, cash checks and letters of credit, if you have things like that, secure passage on trains and steamers, and will be useful in many such ways.

A point to consider is the distance to be covered in a daily march, and here you find it an advantage to be alone. If your associates are elderly and slow, they will

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pull you back, while if they are young, springy, and secretly resolved on outdoing each other, what should be a tour of observation degenerates into a mere scramble, and you end each day fagged and disheartened. No rule can be made, because weather and roads have much to do with progress. Light rains need not stay you, but mud will, and in this country the art of road-making is in its infancy. In much of the South the roads are as rude as the people, and are often mere trails, impassable for wagons. In one section, in Eastern Tennessee, where I stretched my legs a little, the only access from one town to another was along a railroad track. The roads of the prairie district are often shameful: hog-wallows where wagons break down and farmers lose more than the price of decent highways through their inability to get to market. Even in New England one must prepare for hard going, for the farmers, poor and unprogressive, too often think that good roads are made only for bicycles. Would that some of those complaining gentry could be dropped

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down in England, France, or Switzerland for a day! What they need is object lessons.

But suppose the going to be fair, and a man able to keep his feet moving through some hours of sunshine, what might be his daily stent? Perhaps twenty miles. He may want to turn aside and botanize, or enjoy a view, or swim, or climb a hill, or chat with people at the tavern or farm-house where he gets his lunch, so that he will be content with fifteen. Or, he may take a delight in his own strength, in conquering leagues of distance, and thirty miles a day will not be too many. It is well to be comfortably tired; that gives appetite and sleep; but the exhaustion of overdoing may nearly cripple the traveller for two or three days. The first stiffness of the muscles must not scare him. If he lounges about long after his first twenty-five or thirty miles he will have to be broken in all over again. If he will keep moving on the second day it will hurt at first, but by resting frequently and walking easily he will be in good condition

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by night. The mistake made by green walkers and climbers is that of allowing their enthusiasm to run away with them at the outset of the trip, and suffering from stiff knees and sore muscles for days thereafter. I recall the wabbling legs and pained expression of two friends who had begun a hundred-mile tramp with lightsome gambols, and were presently glad to get back to the cars. Looking sadly on each other, one said, "C——, we are a pair of magnificent ruins." If you will do walking to brag about, let it be at the finish.

Belike, when you take your time, you will rest for a day or two here and there. Most travellers make for a city when they would spoil an hour; but even if one has not to consider his pocket, even if he is not called to the country for hunting, fishing, botanizing, landscape, or any scientific or artistic purpose, the quaintness of its people, the interest of village architecture, traditions, or employments, will take hold on an open mind. Rustic taverns may be dull places as compared with city hotels, but as

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museums for the exhibit of human nature they are superior. I never lounge before the fire in the dim, smoky tap-room or office of a tavern without finding the time well spent. The big, slow, profane, hearty, good-tempered farmers always have something to say worth the hearing, and their grimy, uncouth selves are always worth seeing. What queer phrases you hear! A wagoner dilating to his knot of hearers on the "wuthlessness" of a hill family, specifies, "And there was Uriah, lyin' up to the house all day lappin' lightnin'." Lightning is rum. They are not always men of wide view, these agriculturists: in Presbyterian districts they think ill of Methodists, and in Republican townships the Democrats are popularly believed to be the devil's children. They do not always see natural beauty, nor think so highly of it as they do of the artificial. They welcome any chance to get together, be it to elect a school committee or to inspect the prize pumpkins at the county fair. It is well to see them with greased locks, squeaky boots, and comfortless

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clothes at church, and if there is anything in the way of a show at the village hall, or the Odd-Fellows' room, or the school-house, attend it by all means, for the audience will be the best part of it.

In nothing is the growth of taste in the American people more obvious than in the change in their social amusements, for rustic delights must always be measurably the same. The enjoyments of town, on the contrary, being artificial, are capable of improvement, and changes for the better have been hastened by co-ordinate advances in building, lighting, heating, ventilation, plumbing, decoration, and mechanism. Whether or not the theatre affords as good an art as it did to our grandfathers, there is no question that it is a brighter, pleasanter, safer, and more comfortable house than it was in their time; and even churches and schools may be kept clean and warm without exciting a dread lest this should be interfering with the decrees of Providence.

Much is done toward getting town folks out of their houses and into the air.

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Parks have been created, boulevards, drive-ways, and bicycle paths extended, shelters, baths, and band-stands erected, summer towns have grown up on the beaches, picnic groves and dancing pavilions have multiplied, boats ply on urban and suburban waters, train and trolley-car are carrying people from the tenements to places where they can gasp and drink beer. To offset this lure into the open the shows of town must be more picturesque, more varied, more beautiful, more naughty, sometimes. And, truly, the popular entertainments in our American cities—saving only the drama—would be melancholy curiosities if they could be revived. There were the panoramas, gaudily painted on canvas and impressively unrolled before the multitude. They represented Arctic explorations, scenes in the American wars, the Irish lakes, the Mississippi. Who ever hears of them to-day? It is doubtful if one has been shown since the Centennial. If they are in existence, you will find them roaming through the farm districts. The villages have advanced with the towns, but

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slowly. They have minstrel shows, varieties, concerts and the circus, and the quack medicine vender with his banjo-player and Indians, and the talented "family," whose head is manager and tenor singer; materfamilias, soprano and accompanist; Miss Arvaletta, cornet soloist; Master Jacob, violinist and clog-dancer; and Master James, aged six, elocutionist. Oh, how they suffer in the provinces, if only they knew it! They are about where the towns were thirty-five years ago. Does anybody remember the Peak family of bell-ringers, the Hutchinson family of singers, the Rev. Mr. Fletcher, first of the uncounted multitude of stereopticon lecturers, "Temperance" Dodge, "That Comical Brown," Philip Phillips, "the singing pilgrim," and all those people who had star engagements and red-lettered bills in the cities? Their counterparts are struggling precariously through the backwoods. One entertainer who, in his day, was nearly as well known as Booth, I came upon recently in a village, where, with the aid of two other singers and a manager, he

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gave one of his "delightful and illustrious evenings." As this was a poor place of two or three hundred people, we asked him why he did not go on to the next town, four miles away, where he would draw on a population of over a thousand. "Oh, that's too big a place for us," said he.

If there are no shows, if the tavern does not sell liquor on the sly (thereby making itself legal and unpopular), the cross-roads grocery is sure to be open until nine o'clock every evening, and the discussions and prophecies on politics and agriculture that are made by lean men with slouch hats and chin beards, who sit the while on counters and cracker-barrels, are not to be lightly regarded. And, though you are of a kind and disposing nature, you can have no idea what a deal of good you do to those people in supplying them with something to talk about. Their discussions of your business, when you are out of earshot, and their direct questions about yourself, your home, your engagements, and your name,—they don't often ask that,

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because they learn it from the tavern register,—are not inspired by mere curiosity; they grow out of a yearning for more experience and understanding; so don't be huffy if they seem personal. As you stride up the road the children will see you and run to report to their parents and the hired man, so that you will pass in review before the household. Long after you are out of sight the family will be considering your case:

"Wonder if that could ha' been Eleazar Ames's nephew he was expectin' from Nashua."

"No; he'd ha' sent a team for him, wouldn't he?"

"Suppose he was one of them lightnin'-rod agents? He had a bag."

"I don't hardly think so. I guess he's sellin' books."

"Well, he won't sell any more 'Lives of Distinguished Congressmen' in this house; now, that's a fact."

"'Twouldn't be surprisin' if he was one of those actor fellers lookin' for work."

"Why, sakes alive! I jest happen to

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remember that 'Bijah Spaulding is expectin' a new hand down to his blacksmith shop, and that's who it is."

"Te-he! If it is, 'Bijah'll be figgerin' on havin' him jine the Baptist church, and I did hear he was Congregational himself."

Now aren't you glad you came? Think what a refreshment you are to these parched and eager questioners! Sometimes they overdo it a little. In my teens I met a rustic who stared at me as I approached as though never, in all his days, had he seen so strange an object. The nearer I drew the more his jaw fell, the larger grew his pupils, the more he was mastered by surprise. It was amusing, yet irritating. I resolved on homœopathic treatment. Slackening pace, I regarded him with equal amazement, my eyes widened, my mouth fell open, my arms dangled weakly; at last I stopped and stared until my eyes felt dry. This proceeding put the youth into an ecstasy of astonishment; his eyes threatened to pop out of his head, and wrens might have nested in his mouth. Gradually a sense stole over him that

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my performance might be disingenuous. Twitches and gulps showed that he was becoming lucid, and presently he regained self-control with a start. He went in-doors with his eyes behind him, and brooded on this phenomenon for days, no doubt, wondering how he had deserved such a compliment.

Except the tramps and a few dogs, there is nothing to create disquiet in the country, and tramps merely infest the roads between important towns; you never see them in remote hamlets, for they might find work there. If you carry cash about you, it may be secured in various pockets with safety-pins. On a European tour I converted my little wealth into gold and had it sewed in a belt of double cotton flannel, worn inside of my clothing. Each piece was separated by a few stitches from its neighbor, and its value was marked outside in ink. And how soon it vanished!

In choosing a time for walking, take, if you can, the season you best like, though it be in blazing August or shrill January. It is well, however, to remember that in

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winter our roads are bad; that in spring they are worse; that in summer one is in danger of sunstroke. It is in autumn that the roads are hardest; then the air is bracing, the summer revellers have gone home, and the skies and woods are glorious.

Have you a knack for sketching? Then take a sketch-book with you. A camera will do more and do it quicker, but it is heavy, it implies plates, chemicals, and dark rooms, while the sketch gives results that the photograph cannot. As you look at the drawing in later years it all comes back to you, because your attention was vigorously applied to the subject. They say that you will remember a view if you look at it so long and steadily that when you turn away you can still see it. On the same principle the theme of the drawing stays by you. You recall how the rocks shone gray in the morning sun, how the cloud-plumes swirled above the hills, how the light danced on the brook, and what a field of golden-rod spread beyond it; you remember the freshness of the breeze laden with odors from the bal-

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sams, and you hear again the cool singing of the water, the rustle of falling leaves, and the airy whispering of the pines. Every such memory is blessed. It assuages the hardness of city life. It gives to you a healthful moment, and you bought it with easy toil.

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Night-Prowls in the Streets

DARKNESS is kind: it covers so much that is ugly. In the country it obliterates beauty; but in the city, where beauty must be shared on even terms, at least, with harshness, we may well be thankful for it. Night in the street is full of suggestion, there is play for fancy in dim vistas and half-seen objects, whereas fancy retreats, appalled, before the portentous spectacle that unfolds in the slums and the platitudinous avenues and houses of the well-to-do. At night a city is romantic and poetic. Its practical side disappears with the sun, and under the celestial and electric stars it is gay, emotional, fantastic. It is almost laughable, this mockery on their real selves that stony streets and stony men take on in gaslight. Perhaps cities are like their populace in this: that they are always right senti-

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mentally, whatever they are morally. You know, Donizetti would beat his wife, then cry over his improvisations at the piano. Napoleon would see the slaughter of his troops unmoved, but would weep at pathos in a play. If emotions controlled us instead of ambitions and appetites, how good a few of us might be!

Yet, we have only to turn in at the doorway, and we have as good as a daylight quantity of the trifling and unwise: people dining, dicing, dancing, laughing, singing, acting, after the fatigues of the day. Perhaps they are more themselves than they are at their desks and benches. It is worth our while to prowl, if only to listen to the sounds that come through windows: the talk of company; the crash of rifle-butts on an armory floor; the beating of mugs on a table in a *commers;* the wailing and whining of two amateurs who suppose that they are singing a duet; the screechy mirth of shop-girls at the ball of the McCabe Association; the strange snarl of a Chinese fiddle in the back room of a laundry; the applause and racket as the political speaker

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in the hall concludes his remarks, beaming with satisfaction that he has convinced a lot of people who were already convinced; and—hark!—the throbbing of an organ and a chant, the Miserere. In all this lightness the conscience of the city is awake, and hope still claims the hearts of men. Heigh-ho! Solemn themes get few listeners, for not one remains on the sidewalk before the church, whereas a throng is forging in at the brilliantly lighted theatre. Listen: it is a loud, acid voice, (and) of a woman, that holds the multitude in joyous trance:

> "I went to Brogan's, Saturday night.
> There I met Callahan. We got tight.
> In came O'Brien along wit' his gang.
> Callahan told him he'd better go hang.
> O'Brien fetched Callahan one in the eye.
> Says he, 'I'm onto you. You're my pie.'"

And so on. Some think it wit; some think it music; some enjoy it with the studious air of a critic, seeming to give thought to it. There is no discrimination. Among the *hoi polloi* "everything goes." I wonder if the pleasures of good taste are as keen as those of bad taste and no taste.

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It seems almost pathetic, this variety show, but perhaps we are the ones to be pitied for not being able to like it. Even the drama, most natural and human of the arts in its intention, is the most artificial among them in its form.

Back to the street again, with its roar and glare, its throng of jostling people. There is a different character in a night crowd from that of the day. Timid and conservative folk are afraid of the dark, as if they were likely to tread on the tails of cobras or dinosaurs on their door-steps; so the people of the street have something of the gay, the reckless, the vicious. The self-sufficient man always comes out with the stars to caress his whiskers and watch for admiration. A man is self-satisfied when his personality is so insignificant that his mind takes in the whole of it. Yet, this self-complacency gives a certain authority that is acknowledged by people who have other things to think about, and who step aside to let pomp have its stately way, their instinct being to avoid rubbing elbows with it. The vulgar and refined

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are apt to be, not potentially, but temperamentally divisible as positive and negative, although our classing here is arbitrary, since John, negative to James, is positive to Samuel.

The positive is a daylight quality; the negative is nightly, quiet. Positive people are everywhere praised and hated: they work for their own good. The negative work for the world's good, and may be tricked. The lad of generous sentiments but retiring way, unbaffled as yet by scorn, not yet unstrung by the refusal of the universe to answer his questions, thinks of the good of all, even as incident to his own happiness. He never lacks masters. Napoleon is a positive type; Christ a negative. We require a certain selfishness for preservative purposes, but egoism is a narrow measure of a man. It is the altruistic range he has that describes his largeness: his loves, likes, works, and benefits. Few suffice to themselves: a divine frenzy for interference projects art, socialism, law, and manners on the whole body of mankind; howbeit this altruism of the later centuries

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may be only an instinct to merge the individual into the whole, the part into the entirety. When young we feel our personality and glory in it. As we grow older we see its indifferent consequence,—the inferiority of the part to the whole, while making allowance for dominant individuality. Assembled at a meeting, a dinner, a play, a battle, we find the *ego* we had vaunted to be no better than a thousand others. Perhaps we are sorry at this; perhaps we are glad to be supported and absorbed.

One charm of the night walk is its mystery. We do not want facts thrown at us, as if we were doing wrong, and they were bricks. I suppose it is a little pride of mind that makes us reserve some rights of understanding and discovery, and a pride of individuality that makes us wish to impress ourselves on what we see. Night is a time for impressions rather than for the getting of knowledge, although if we know a good deal about something we are pretty sure to see it; not in its own light, perhaps, but in ours. Unless our specialty is seeing,

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—and thoroughness in that, as in any department or function, "pays,"—we hurry over the earth to find what was at our elbow at home; we go to the fields for botanical study before we examine our door-yards. White and Thoreau, the master-watchers, kept to the confines of their villages. What splendid effects are never looked at! Fog, swirling about the fifteenth stories of office buildings; sunsets; stars; northern lights;—we go to Europe to see them! One of the needs of our restless age is content and familiarity with what we have. Less general information, less superficiality, some happy ignorance of integral calculus, could be endured if we were stoutly grounded on a dozen facts.

Which recalls me to my position that in our night-rambles we are not after the material,—at least not the petty. For, as we mature, we rebel against littleness and detail. The large, the general, the essential, are what we want. We demand simplicity and order in our pictures—for example, in our reading, our music, our

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architecture—no less than in our way of viewing the world and the men in it. These are attributes of every good picture painted, seen, or fancied. We find better compositions in gaslight and moonlight than in daytime, because detail is lost and mass is compassed. So in our thinking we cannot afford to put all facts into an equal light, because not every fact is a commanding fact. The sun of truth, too, is so strong that we have to turn partly from it when we see the world in its illumination. Our eyes are not yet the eyes of eagles. We have not risen far beyond our worldly pedestals. Yet to many, material things are least. Nature is not the same in the eye of the scientist that it is in the eye of the nature lover. To the one it is as a man on the dissecting-table; to the other as the man erect and speaking. Have we not been dissecting long enough? We have never learned to put the cut limbs back again and make a man. We are interested in nature, less as a problem or result in chemistry than as it reflects ourselves, though he is a finer man who

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reflects nature. To live happily with it is not so much a matter of knowledge as of sympathy, which likewise qualifies us best to live with men.

We find in prowling at night a reversal of many effects we are used to,—a reversal as complete as that from light to dark. This mass of masonry, three hundred feet high, that by day seems to crush the earth—lo! it is phantom architecture now; a cloud form beetling down from the stars, and only a shade more tangible as it descends into gaslight. Here is a row of dwellings not yet roofed. By day it is cheap. By night it is the walls of Troy. Look along this avenue, where at noon the ash-carts clatter and refuse blows into the eyes: it is now a highway into fairy-land, with a double row of white stars beaconing the way. So the little square, so green, so joyous in the sun, is now a space of blankness and blackness, all its life of tree and flower concealed or hinted merely in crouching shapes and phosphor patches. Distances are confused: the light twinkling away up yonder, where the belated clerk

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is working, might be at nearly any height you please; the turn of the street that you know is half a mile beyond looks as if it might be a league away. Especially are these things baffling when the air is thick, either with mist or snow. A fog obscures rather than darkens in a town, for one has less a sense of blackness, even in a London "pea-soup," than he has in the small hours of a clear winter morning. For a fog soaks up light and diffuses it again faintly. Along the Bay of Fundy the sailors talk of "fog-eaters," which are spots of brightness in the haze where the sun is striking in. This lumination seems really to be absorbed as its warmth takes up the cloud that rests on the sea. So every lamp and gas-jet makes a halo for itself, and before we turn a corner we know where the street-light is: the mist is aglow for yards about it, as if from a conflagration, and walks, walls, and tree-stems, being wet, reflect it, too. On the Brooklyn bridge, on a thick night, the shine of the green-globed lamps is uncanny, while the red lights make a mist of blood.

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In Europe I made a practice of reaching the cities after dark, gaining my first impressions of them in the night. They are dream towns in my memory, and the half seen stays with me more securely than the obvious. It is one of the delights of travel that you do so much of it afterward, as you sit before your fire or under your fig-tree. Again I see the cathedral of Cologne heaved, mountainous, above the roofs; I sit with Heidelberg students at their beer in the Red Ox garden, watching the moon through the Castle's ruined windows; I stumble through the winding alleys of Mainz; I hear the clamor of Seven Dials, as I thread its maze of carts and jostle cyprians and hucksters; I lounge on the Quay Malaquais, listening to the lap of the Seine, watching its oily writhings, while the hum and scum of Paris move dully here and there; I climb the hill of Lincoln through streets three centuries old, and Great Tom tolls midnight out of a cloud; the square of Antwerp glimmers as the cathedral's silver voices sing the passing of the time; or it is in Lauterbrunnen that

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I see the Jungfrau kindling while below is waste of night: its snows, piled to the sky, greening, yellowing, reddening, silvering, to the unseen sun.

Because we forget what it is by day we can value the town by night. Forgetfulness! No less a precious privilege than memory.

Hints of nature, too; you find those in the streets. Night-hawks and bats are astir, moths are beating themselves to death against the electric lights, the stars are always within a few trillions of miles of us; the moon and sun are the same, barring a little lack of clearness, as in the country. None the less, one indulges a love for nature in town under discouragements as strong as he would suffer in cultivating a love for the city in the country. Natural sights are glossed and glozed with artifice; sounds of birds and insects are but faintly heard through the clatter and roar; smells of flowers and herbage must be penetrating indeed to make themselves felt through the fetor of the pave, the reek of tenements, the smoke and fume of

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factories; and hardest of all is to gain some sense of the stability, the calm, the charm, that inhere in the earth and air and water where men trouble neither. We must guard against misunderstanding. What we might swear by in the country we must take with questionings in town. For example: an April night falls warm, succeeding a week of cool weather, and from my door I hear what I believe is the piping of frogs,—the multitudinous, high-pitched chorus of the spring. This sound comes from the south, and a mile away in that direction are ponds, filling old hollows in the land. By reference to my Thoreau I find that I am justified in supposing the song to be a nocturne of these spry and happy reptiles, for they sang in his day and in his colder land a month earlier than I happen to hear them now. I have often heard them before; there are no factories or industries in that quarter to make the noise; so why not say that they are frogs? Only because I hear a hum and clank far up the street. Evidently a road-roller is at work. And some ungreased portions

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of the machine may cause the chippering song. I have no doubt that it is the piping of frogs, but in science or the courts such testimony is not enough. In the country, where, unfortunately, they are sparing of the road-roller, there could be no room for question.

Air is purer by night than by day, and that is one offset to the heaviness of the dark. Blessed is the stillness that bad weather makes, especially snow. The smell of fresh snow in the streets is nearly as pungent as it is in the fields. These muffled nights and these wild ones, both keeping people in-doors and sending them early to bed, are fine for reflective strolls. We are teased into them if we go to the window. It is so large, so full of mystery out there, that you throw aside your work and pull on your coat. We are entitled to tire of our work, since it is finite. Nature we never fathom. It is always new, it is always our refuge, it suggests, it gives courage and energy. So we go out and gather strength, and most likely waste a part of the walk in making schemes for to-

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morrow. Curious, our inability to live in the present: always for something to come, or because of something past. It is a high price to pay for thought. It is doubtful if the brutes would change with us.

A jog from a heedless wayfarer arrests you there, and you say, hotly, that brutes have changed places with some of us. These sudden jars do set one's temper bubbling. But when they come it is discipline to put yourself in the offender's place, to see what his object was, if he had one; and often you calm down in a conviction that you were as much in the way and the wrong as he. Sometimes you find traces of yourself in him when he is not to be forgiven, and then—disagreeable truth hurts our feelings worse than slander, doesn't it? When lies are told about us we are conscious of rectitude, and can afford to care nothing; but the ugly fact that we know or find to be true stirs remorse, or conscience, and makes our hearts ache. So we are punished; for hell is the bad that a man thinks of himself. In proportion as he is irresponsible, through

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hereditary disposition, for vice and crime, his conscience is dulled. That is because he deserves less hell than the man who wilfully goes astray.

Are we always wrong, though, when we think we are? How much of our sin is against health and morals, and how much against tradition and convention? Would we not be startled if we could live so long and thoroughly away from men that when we returned we could see them as they are and judge them fairly? Could we do it? Not to be related to our fellows,—that would be hard, though the extent of the privation would be commensurate with our lack of self-resource. To be cut off from material nature,—that would imply a self-sufficiency beyond experience, prophecy, or understanding. Yet, who knows? We may be spiritualized into such pure essence as to free ourselves from substance and subsist as thought or being. There will be no sin then.

Speaking of sin, I dreamed the other night (I had a Welsh rarebit after the play), and the dream was grewsome. I put it into

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this form—it is pretty bad, I guess—as a freak in the Sanskrit mode, the which I would like to see some one use who really writes verse, for the oddity is that of rhyming the first words of the lines:

Storm flames light the walls of the castle, stark and
hoar:
Form of power piled skyward by hands imbrued in
gore.
Mad shapes rush overhead on black and whistling wings;
Bad things chatter in the dark. What is this that clings
Round my knees, lifting eyes that blaze through paper
face,
Crowned with sin, yet tempting? I ban your hellish
race!
The cloud and smoke that pour from the broken postern
gate
Beshroud the forms of men whose race has met its fate.
Fast by a bier they moan and toss their arms above one's
head:
Last of their line. All's done. The creature's soul is
dead.

Night walking in town may be practice for day walking in the country, for seeing little at once we grow keen to see all. By day the environment differs: things are flung at your notice in the city; in the country they elude you. It is, then, a

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more educative process to find them in the fields than in the streets. It is a special schooling, though. Some people see nothing when they are in the fields; they merely want to go home. They are over-developed on the town side, anæmic on the other. Those who go through the earlier years of life without learning how to apply themselves seldom gain a power of concentration and success after middle age. Continuity makes their heads ache. The ability to work and observe is as much to be cultivated as temperance, truth-telling, and good manners. Tramps lose the power to support themselves, and people who are brought up in the idleness of either poverty or wealth commonly fail as earners of wages or fame. They are not true friends who merely flatter and indulge us: the best are they who make us do our best.

And we want to enlarge within, that the world may enlarge for us without. What? Have I said it before? I will not stop to see, but there was a twinge of memory as I set it down. Of the six hundred million people who tramp and toddle about this

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planet every day, is any one so above or below the average that he never repeats himself, or thinks or says as others do? Is it conceivable that the same thoughts, the same phrases, should not get themselves published in half a dozen tongues? The blessed Autocrat tells how he replied to a feminine sympathizer in his pains of lecture travel, "Yes, I am like the huma, the bird that never alights, being always in the cars as he is always on the wing;" and meeting her years after said exactly the same thing. A few minutes later his memory flashed up within him and he was covered with confusion. Now, it was no stock phrase with him. He had said it but twice in his life, and undoubtedly the second meeting provoked an unconscious cerebration about the first, so that a subtle train of ideas led to a mechanical repetition of the figure. Queer fates befall one in this world: I knew a boy who used to be spanked because he was so fat.

Well, we have been discoursing so fast that we have not seen much, but remember, in some quarters that is an advantage. If

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nature is barred out in the day we get hints of it out of the air at night. Even those imps that whine and snicker among the wires overhead bring messages from districts that men have not "improved," and that keep their wild look and wild music. It is claimed that man improves nature by his parks, his lawns, his high strains of flowers and plants, his more speedy, more milky, more hairy beasts, that he humanizes nature, or tries to. As to any absolute increase in worth or beauty, it needs some impartial critic to say if, or no, this has been gained. Where shall he be found? When we find him we will ask him, seriously, What are men for? What is life for? What is creation for?

The clock tells us it is late, and our jaunt must end. It is well to circumscribe these tours now and again, to see what we can see near home. Travel is most good when it opens a man's eyes to what can be seen without it. Thoreau made few reports on Canada, Minnesota, and Staten Island, but perhaps he saw his Massachusetts clearer for those visits. One lesson of travel, then,

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is to stop it: to centre rather than diffuse ourselves. The sky broods with kindest color and most constant tenderness over that spot of earth that is sanctified to our affections; and so that we keep the watchful eye and open heart, we shall find infinite riches in a little room. It inspirits us to know this. It assures us of the competence and abundance of the world to meet the wants of its children.

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Some Humbugs of Science

A SMATTERING of physical science, such, at least, as relates to plants, stones, birds, and insects, will be a great help on a walk, especially if you go alone. Yet, does not the mere joy of the thing go to him who views nature as a spectacle rather than as phenomena? to the artist rather than to the scientist? If only natural history could be a little more humanized and popularized,—but it will be, one of these days. (This is going to be a scolding chapter: I can tell by the way it starts.) Some men are as stingy with knowledge as some other men are with money or work. For centuries it has been the custom among them to build fences of ceremony and dig moats of obfuscation about any facts they may have gained, in order to keep other people from

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sharing. It is a custom that makes other people look up to them as higher beings, maybe, and it is pleasant to be a high being. This sort of humbug began with the priests of Egypt and India. The man who wanted to learn of them how much were two and two; what other parts of an isosceles triangle were unequal to its base; and which end of a plant came up first, had to go through a special course of sprouts before these precious knowledges could be imparted. What was called philosophy—and it wasn't—was to be discussed only by people who had stumbled around in dark rooms, been dangled over pits by a rope around the waist, been asked to meditate before skulls, been made to jump through fire, and do all manner of boyish things. After this maltreatment they constituted an order of the illuminati who were then allowed to have fun with other candidates, and whose very existence struck an awe into the breasts of their fellow-citizens.

But this circusing of science was not over in the ancient days. It was pro-

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tracted through the Middle Ages by other mysteries. If a man had discovered that a cow had a backbone and an oyster had none, he wrapped himself in the mantle of a superior dignity and held aloof from commoners. Occasionally the commoners took him out and burned him, believing that a man loaded with information like that could have got it only from the devil, who, through some peculiarly human process of reasoning, seems to have acquired a mortgage on whatever was pleasant and profitable in this world. And even to-day the scientists are making it hard for other folks to share in their work, their knowledge, and their discoveries. They have built up a shibboleth peculiar to themselves, and until he has mastered it one cannot learn from them. It is founded on Latin and Greek, the same being dead, and to most people unavailable. Thoreau knew the gibberish as well as anybody, yet he was moved to say, "The sciences are protected from assault by a palisade or *chevaux-de-frise* of technical terms; so, also, the learned man may ensconce him-

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self and conceal his little true knowledge behind hard names."

Botany, for example, is a study that would be a recreation if it were put into English. Let us see what Gray says a dandelion is:

"*Taraxacum.* Head many-flowered, large, solitary on a slender hollow scape. Involucre double, the outer of short scales; the inner of long, linear scales erect in a single row. Achenes oblong-ovate to fusiform, 4–5 ribbed, the ribs roughened, the apex prolonged into a very slender beak, bearing the copious soft and white capillary pappus. Perennials or biennials; leaves radical, pinnatifid or runcinate; flowers yellow. *T. officinale.* Smooth, or at first pubescent; outer involucre reflexed. Pastures and fields everywhere. Indigenous forms occur northward and in the Rocky Mountains. April–September. After blossoming, the inner involucre closes, and the slender beak elongates and raises up the pappus while the fruit is forming; the whole involucre is then reflexed, exposing to the

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wind the naked fruits, with the pappus displayed in an open globular head."

Few people quarrel with the foregoing facts, because few people know, from those statements, what the facts are. The definition can be read only in the light of a special education, and without that, or a dictionary, is unintelligible. Is there any gain from treating the gladsome and humble dandelion as if it were one of the hermetic mysteries? Let us see if it could not be as easily described in common speech, with, perhaps, some facts as well worth printing as those about the achenes and reflexed involucres:

Common dandelion. *Taraxacum officinale.* Named from the French *dent de lion*, meaning lion's tooth. The notches on its leaves faintly suggest lion's teeth. Greek derivation, *taraxis*, in allusion to its disquieting medicinal power. This member of the composite family is of European origin, but is now domesticated throughout the north temperate zone, and is often seen in the Arctic regions. It has not gained a foothold in the southern hemisphere. The

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plant, which lives for two years, fixes itself stoutly into the earth by a tough, parsnip-like root, six to fourteen inches long, which often projects a little from the ground and sends out slight rootlets. The leaves are green, dull of surface, three to twelve inches long, an inch wide, radiate from the top of the root, rise but little above the ground, are sharply scolloped with points turned towards the root. The flowers spring from the centre of the whorl of leaves. What appears like a single flower is a head of one hundred and fifty bright yellow blossoms held in a cup of dull green sepals, the blossoms strap-shaped, half an inch long and arranged in close spirals. After insects have fertilized them the sepals close over the head, and it remains quiet for a week, ripening its seed. Then the stem rises until in four or five days it has lifted it from three to fifteen inches above the surrounding grass, so that the seed can be dispersed by the wind; for during its quiescence the cup has become a cushion through the turning backward of its edge; each flower has

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withered, but its pistil remains as an erect white thread, an inch long, slightly winged at the tip, its seed lightly embedded in the white cushion. These pistils, which stand out in all directions, so that they form a fluffy ball, now act as parachutes and carry the seed wherever the wind blows them. During the first year the plant is said to bear no flowers. It is hard to raise in captivity, demands room and air, but is not particular as to soil. As many as thirty heads of flowers grow on a single plant. It blooms all the year if snow is absent, but chiefly from April to July, and again from September to November. Seed-time begins in May and is generally over in October, but I have seen what appeared to be a dandelion-seed flying across a city park on the 21st of March. Its young leaves are eaten raw with oil and vinegar as a salad, usually with lettuce, and the young plants make excellent "greens," in spite of a slight bitterness, if boiled and served with mustard and vinegar. The dried roots are roasted and ground as an adulterant for coffee, and during the war, when

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cheap substitutes were made for all manner of high-priced things, "dandelion coffee" was sold by grocers. The root contains a bitter, crystallizable principle called taraxacin. Gathered in the autumn, this root is boiled, and the infusion is used medicinally as a diuretic, aperient, and tonic. It acts on the liver, and is useful in dropsy and dyspepsia, but is slow in operation. Children have a pretty fancy for telling the time by blowing against the globes of down. As many seed as they find after the third puff are supposed to mark the hour: four seeds, four o'clock. It is also blown upon to "find if mother wants us." If all the seed are dispersed the parent is in no anxiety. If any remain, it is the child's duty to start for home. Seed seldom remain. Children also weave the flowers together in chains, but they do not keep their brightness as daisies will. The flower-stems are hollow, and when broken exude a milky, bitterish sap.

So much for so much. A few terms, like sepals, petals, pistils, stamens, and pollen, must be kept because they are

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common and simple, but more technicalities than these are troublesome. And botanies make a language all of their own. Suppose, for instance, the unlearned, after reading Gray's assertions about a dandelion, turns to his glossary to see what an involucre is. It proves to be a whorl of bracts about a flower. What, then, is a bract? He finds it to be the scale from the axil of which a flower or its pedicel proceeds. One has, therefore, to look up axil and pedicel, and by that time he has got away from involucres. Or, he wants the definition of pappus, and finds it to be the "modified calyx limb in compositæ, forming a crown of very various character at the summit of the achene." So he must hunt up compositæ and achene.

And another common plant: The variety of ambrosia that botanists called by the distantly respectful name of *A. artemisifolia* L., but by every-day people known as ragweed, also called in a few localities hogweed, bitterweed, and Roman wormwood, is recognizable, in spite of the botanical description, and is one of the

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measures and certainties of June. It might be improving to know what Artemis, or Artemisia, had to do with it, and whether the sponsor was the queen of Halicarnassus, born B.C. 480, or the consort of Mausolus of Caria, born one hundred and thirty years later, or the goddess Artemis, who never got herself born at all. "Coarse, homely weeds" I find them called by Gray, "the miserable ragweeds" by another author; yet a child suggests the name of candelabra, "because they hold their pretty green candles so straight." Give a bad name to a plant or a dog, and when it grows up it will not part from it. Darlington says that "this worthless weed occurs in most cultivated grounds, and is usually abundant after a crop of wheat; but if the land be good the plant seems to be smothered or choked out the next season by the crop of clover and timothy. It is always ready, however, like several other coarse weeds, to make its appearance whenever a grassy turf is broken up. The curious anomaly of the flowers on the terminal spikes being all pistillate is fre-

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quently met with." But the same plant may also bear sterile and fertile flowers on different heads.

Thus much about this plant and more, because I remember noting it as a child and marking the beauty of its deep-cut foliage; enough like that of a young tomato to make a green boy look twice at it, and later, when a florist showed to me with pride a *grevillea robusta* from his hot-house, it occurred to me that he was slow for not doing as much for a greener, spryer plant that was like it,—the ragweed. I never knew how they called it until I had grown up, because such things are so common that nobody cares for the name of them, and because there is not in all literature, so far as I know, any description which is intelligible to the unscientific reader. I am not fully convinced by Gray's assurance that the fertile flowers are "sessile in the axil of leaves and bracts, at the base of the racemes of sterile heads; sterile involucres flattish or top-shaped, of 7–12 scales united into a cup, containing 5–20 funnel-form staminate flowers with slender

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chaff intermixed or none," and more to a similar purpose. Was the desperation of Latin naming ever shown better than in dubbing this genus ambrosia? That was food for the gods. The pigs don't eat this, I think, though Hamilton Gibson has seen goldfinches and snow-birds eating its seeds in winter. Sometime our botanies will contain English equivalents, and there will be a picture of every plant and flower, —the only way to identify a specimen, and a cheap and easy way with our phototypic processes.

I confess to a fondness for this sturdy squatter of the road-side and vacant lots; it is such a frank, stout, self-possessed creation. It wears no artificial graces, it asks no favors, it is clean of parasites, and say what you will, its fern-like leaves are pretty. In sandy soil it has a stiff and angular disposition of its arms, throwing them out in star-like rays, while on richer ground it rises to the dignity of a bush, and if only it had flowers that you could see two feet away, horticulturists would try to improve the type. Wouldn't it be in-

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teresting if it were cultivated in rows like celery?

A farmer in Kentucky says that when hard pressed he cut ragweed for hay and fed it to his stock, but it did not make good milk or butter. John Burroughs, to whom he told this, declares that there is little complimentary to say about the ragweed, that it is the bane of asthmatic patients, and about the only one of our weeds that follows the plough and harrow. "Except that it is easily destroyed, I would suspect it to be an immigrant from the Old World." It is remarkable how stout some of Europe's pests will grow after transplanting. Take thistles, house-sparrows, monocles, anarchists, fleas, Tammany, St. Johnswort, and how much more obnoxious they become on our free soil than they ever dared to be at home! But we have to thank Europe for many lendings, none the less. "The hateful toadflax," as Burroughs calls it, is one of the cheeriest yet most modest of wild flowers, and makes as good a bouquet as orchids do. Strip this "butter and eggs" from the

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fields and something would surely be lacking in our early summer landscape.

Autumn is the time when the ragweed becomes actually coarse, and then because it has not learned to grow old gracefully. It ages like a vagrant and grows seedy and out at elbows, instead of venerable. There are grace and pathos in trees and vines that glow with October color, then, having spent their last energy on beauty, drop their leaves and sink to sleep; but plants with contumely that merely dry and break and wither, that splash the fields with rust, even when their summer aspect and demeanor have been exemplary. Nobody has sung of the ragweed, nobody has described it, except botanically, nobody has painted it, pressed it, put it into a hot-house, tried to reform it, or sat in the shade of it and tried to think large things about it. All-seeing Thoreau does not mention it, and the physicians have not put it into the materia medica. As the old woman in the country does not dry or stew it with other "yarbs," I surmise that she once boiled a quantity into a tea and made some suffering patient

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drink a pint of it for a cold, or measles, or rheumatiz, thereby killing him and saving him from ensuing doses of goldthread, tansy, bloodroot, boneset, thoroughwort, and other draughts that farmer lads remember as bitter, blighting, burning, and abominable. I should not in the least wonder if it were a poison. Birds and most insects avoid it while growing, so it is one of the few plants that look stoutly healthy all the season.

But despite its raggedness in the fall, there are ragweeds here and there of agreeable color: a purple bronze. Once in a while a knot of these will have quite a distinction in a field, yet more often they are happenings in a dull and unkempt average. Why one ragweed should have this autumnal privilege and the one beside it should wither and turn brown I have no more idea than I have why, of two maples on the same knoll, one will redden quicker and deeper than its mate. The first frost leaves its scorch on ragweed as soon as on anything in the ground, and an early effect of this cold is the disappearance of its leaves, espe-

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cially near the earth, the stems and seed spikes thereupon becoming the drier, scrawnier, and more conspicuous. In fact, the autumnal disappearance of many species is one of the most puzzling things in nature. Here they are to-day. To-morrow they have vanished. The annuals have sown themselves and the others are in a chrysalis state awaiting the spring and Christian names.

Scientists tell us that it is an advantage to keep botany in Greek and Latin, so that when they read foreign books they will recognize the names, for they remain unchanged by their surroundings. Nobody asks them to destroy the names, nor to refrain from their alleged recreations in foreign literatures; but why bar out the rest of us, who have more than we can do to keep up our English? Why chill the thousands who aspire to know a jimson when they see it, by setting them to look for *datura stramonium?* Why not come to an agreement on common names, as they call them, and authorize them jointly with the Linnæan ones? At present they give not one common name for a plant,

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but four or five, as if trying to bring discredit on the vernacular.

The zoologists are even worse, for the simpler the form the more dreadful things they call it, and a harmless little bug or fish ignorantly wears a title as long as six of itself. Does it worry these worthies that man is called what he is, instead of *homo sapiens?* (*Sapiens*, of course, in honor of the scientists who so endowed him.) The mineralogists have been fairly sensible. The usual ending of ite and lite in their names—abbreviated from lithos, a stone—is harmonious rather than otherwise; but the geologists again plunge us into despair with their conchological, ichthyological, herpetological, ornithological, and entomological six-jointers. Astronomers find it easier for strange reasons to say alpha Centauri than A Centauri. Why not Swan A, B, C, and so on, rather than alpha Cygni, beta Cygni, and the rest of the mixed Greek and Latin? Rather, why not abolish the constellations, since not one of them has the faintest semblance to the thing it is named for? Classicism dies hard. So does humbug.

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But let us not resign hope, for several reforms have been worked in human affairs through directness and plain dealing. Even politics may be improved, some time. As to reform in language (which ought to be written phonetically), it is hardest of all, because it takes such a consensus; but in English we have got rid of the u in color, we spell jail as it sounds, instead of calling it a gaol, and in German the eye-destroying hair-lines are giving way to Roman type. Our own tongue is superb in its opportunities for improvement. Some reforms have been worked in our poetry. It has become hard to understand, so that it is not much read, but it has outgrown certain tricks of its masters. One useful thing learned in the last generation is that nature can go about her business without advice or ordering. Our older poets did not realize that. They always began their work by telling nature to do something that she was doing already. The poet went out on his door-step and said, "Roll on, silver moon," and, all of a sudden, the moon continued to keep on as if he had not said a word. Or, he rambled

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down to the river and enjoined it to "Flow gently, sweet Afton," and it flowed. Or, maybe it was the sea, and he ordered it to "Roll on, thou deep and dark blue ocean, roll," and the waves, obedient, kept coming in. In fact, the poet was needlessly busy superintending things. He told the sun to rise, and mountains to stand still, and clouds to float, and zephyrs to blow, and storms to howl, and grass to grow, and flowers to be fragrant, and birds to soar, and rain to fall. Then he used to pump inspiration into himself at such a rate that you had to believe he had not much of his own. When he wished to write about the way the wind blew on a hill in his neighborhood he would call for his muse, so that all the public heard him. "Come down, O muse," he shrieked; or, "Approach, O muse;" or, "Arise, O muse;" for it is a strange thing about her that she was like policemen, in the respect that she was never at hand when wanted. Nowadays when a poet has anything to say, he merely says it, and does not shift the poverty of the saying upon a spirit that hasn't the power to answer,—female spirit,

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too. The only poetry in which these screams for help seem at all permissible is that of Greece and Rome, for in those countries they pretended to believe in muses.

And I sometimes become so rabid an anarchist that I doubt the value of mathematics. I take the basely practical ground that I never knew a man clever at figures who was brighter in any other way or had quicker instincts and perceptions than his neighbors. If the pressure in our schools is increased, the children must be allowed to choose their studies. Algebra and geometry have been crowded from the high school into lower grades, and it has become a practice to rank scholars more by mathematics than by all other studies together. A lad may be stupid in grammar, his compositions may be ridiculous, he may not know the purpose of the Declaration of Independence or the Constitution, he may believe that the Lena River is in Patagonia, he may not know the difference between a vertebrate and a mollusk, an endogen and an exogen, yet if he is quick at his exam-

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ples he can pass. In a certain school a boy can earn one hundred and fifty points in arithmetic, while perfect spelling counts for only twenty. Is it more important that a person shall be able to write an intelligible letter, or to know what part of three-six-teenths is eight per cent. of six-fifths? He has daily use for other branches, and for higher mathematics none, unless he is a gauger, astronomer, or engineer.

Arithmetic has its use as discipline, like other punishments, but the scholar profits as much by his other studies, and it is abominable that he should be kept back in classes that are several years too small for him, because he is unready in his sums. Any study, followed persistently, has its educative and enlarging force and value, but mathematics have become a fetish in the public schools, as have Greek and Latin in the colleges. A moderate amount of Greek and Latin is a good thing, for it betters a man's knowledge of his own tongue, and helps him to speak it purely, as well as to acquire foreign language more quickly; but to grind away at dead authors

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for four years, painfully parsing and analyzing—isn't there a waste? So with figures: there are people to whom they are not merely tiresome, but repellent; indeed, a fondness for them is constitutional and cannot be induced. Lincoln, Grant, Emerson, Franklin, Beecher, Stevenson,—the line could be spun over pages,—were men who had not mathematical minds. They managed to be great. Yet custom says that only those children with a born aptitude for figures shall obtain the higher education. The boy or girl who will become an engineer or closet astronomer is rare, but thousands of our youth will take to trade, art, the pulpit, law, medicine, soldiering, the stage, music, writing, farming,—employments in which it does not matter a rap whether or no one can tell the ratio of the square of one side of a trapezoid to the squares of the other sides, because they don't use trapezoids. Harvard professors have expressed surprise that so many young men who offer themselves at the entrance examinations write a vile hand and cannot use the mother-tongue

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with ease or certainty. Yet, they all know algebra. I met a college graduate who thought that the stars lay in the track of the planets, and wondered why they never bumped! He had taken the whole course in mathematical astronomy.

It is time to strip science of its affectations. If this is not done, if distasteful studies are forced upon pupils naturally eager for advancement, exact knowledge may fail in esteem, and we may return to the errant and speculative philosophy of a prior century for intellectual training and employment. It might be as well.

And here is where the gain of the tramp comes in: that on the road one looks and judges for himself; that while his training may quicken his sight for things described in the books, it will also make him ready to detect error. He needs only to use sense. What queer reasons they used to give for fossils! They were made by lightning, carved by water, engraved by men, hardened by heat,—anything, rather than admit that they were the remains of animals.

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We in America have been too well content to let such matters take care of themselves, and perhaps it was the fustian of science that put it away from sympathy. Educators, authors, investigators, artists,—all such were idealists; they were of no account in "business." Truly, the idealist does have a hard time in this world. "Yes," they tell him, "your schemes for the diffusion of knowledge, the liberation of slaves, the payment of public debts, the arbitration of disputes, the permission to animals to live, the purifying of politics, are pretty, but they are not practical." The practical view is the low view. If we would stop trying to get as much money as Vanderbilt, and try to get as much wit as Emerson, as much liberty as Thoreau, as much goodness as Thomas à Kempis, there wouldn't be a better world to live in than this. We may not be equal to the task, nor framed for it; but we can help the cause of knowledge by looking everywhere for facts and setting them before the world in plain speech, and help the cause of wisdom by drawing inferences from them.

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A Rustler's Conscience

PEOPLE who go through the Yellowstone country nowaday know little of what that trip meant before the time of the railroad. Four of us made the journey: the Parson, Old Silurian, the Unsalted, and the Tramp; in other words, a city clergyman, a professor of geology, a young collegian, and myself. There was but an apology for a road, and we had to get down and pull logs out of the way to get through. At one point we had no road but a river-bed, and followed it through a cañon. At night we camped wherever there was tent room, and the frost nipped our toes through our blankets. "Toot," our factotum, and "Al," his brother, keeper, also, of the Coyote saloon in Bozeman, were famous hunters, fishermen, and cooks, steady drivers, astonishing drinkers, and they liked to use bad language and

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relate unseemly narratives in order to see the clergyman and the professor wince. They claimed to have committed many sins, but they never worried over them. It was different with a "rustler" we met out there.

After some days of heat and freezing nights, some jolting and climbing and struggling, much marvelling at hot springs and geysers, some swimming to erase from our backs the dents of rocks that had been our beds, and daily tussles with mosquitoes, it was like entering the land of Beulah to descend to Yellowstone Lake, one of the loveliest sheets of water in the world, and to pitch our tent on the soft sward near its shore. Dinner eaten, we trudged off to Natural Bridge, near the lake's western edge,—a dike of travertine that had been pierced and worn in long past centuries by a stream, and that is wide enough for a person to walk upon, from one side of the ravine to the other. The passage is only ten yards long, or thereabout, but there is a drop of nearly a hundred feet to the bottom if one makes a misstep, which he

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need not do. We were lounging near this arch on the northern side, when a tap of hoofs and creak of leather made us look up. A horseman had arrived on the southern brink of the chasm, and evidently wanted to cross. The meeting of men in a wilderness is always excuse for a display of interest and confidence. "Hi, there!" shouted the new arrival. "Is there any way to get over to your side?"

"Yes, that bridge is safe, if you look out for the hole in the middle of it." So he came trotting on, driving a herd of about twenty ponies before him, and having drawn rein as he reached us, we had a bit of talk together. Like many of the frontiersmen he was restrained and quiet; browned and furrowed so by sun and wind that he looked, at first glance, older than he was, for he was at the verge of forty; an easy rider, rough in dress, bearded, long-haired, unkempt; and he had a doubtful, questioning look in his eyes. The usual revolver flapped in its case on his thigh, a knife was in its sheath, a rifle lay across his saddle, and from his belt hung

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a stick marked with eighteen or twenty notches, "one notch for each day he had been out," he said. The ponies of his herd were small, rough-coated, not blooded stock by any means, and were led by a red horse with a bell. There were a couple of colts. I noticed with surprise that two of the horses were loaded with Indian camp equipage, such as does not often form a white man's outfit. A tent of dressed buckskin decorated with Indian pictures was strapped to the back of one of the ponies. The man told us that he had just come from Colorado, was going to Montana to sell his horses, and wanted to know where he could find pasturage and water. We directed him to the grassy opening, two or three miles distant, where we had pitched our own camp, and on returning, afoot, we found that he had picketed his horses a few hundred yards from us, and was preparing to spend the night there.

When our supper was ready we hallooed to him an invitation to come over and help eat it, for a man who went long distances

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in the West usually enjoyed little variety in his bill of fare, and we fancied that our fresh trout and our flapjacks with maple syrup would give an agreeable surprise to his stomach. He accepted (what traveller would not?), and fell to his work with a good appetite. After the meal he lit his pipe, dropped wearily on the earth before the fire and smoked for some minutes, seeming to take comfort in our cheery talk, but offering few remarks of his own and replying with hardly more than monosyllables to our inquiries. When his pipe was out he arose and left us abruptly, striding across the meadow in the direction of his horses.

Toot, who had watched him as he disappeared in the twilight, said in a low voice, "There's something wrong with that rustler. What's he doing with the Injun outfit? And did you notice them ponies? That's pretty healthy talk to give a man about driving such stock as that all the way from Colorado to sell in Montana. Ain't it? Them's Injun ponies, and you bet he's played it low on an Injun some-

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where to get 'em. That's liable to make trouble in this park."

We were inclined to jest at the suspicions of our guide, though he had lived on the frontier from childhood, and had a quick opinion that was often surprisingly right,—a result of trained observation or instinct. As we sat on the earth, gazing into the blaze, listening to the voice of the wind in the pines and the chiming and patting of big and little waves on the beach, another fire flickered at a distance: two prospectors, travelling southward, had stopped there for the night. While getting their supper this happened: The rustler, who should have been asleep in his blanket, suddenly appeared before the younger of the men with a knife pointed at his breast, and in a menacing tone demanded, "What did you tell those people" (indicating us) "that I killed that Indian down at the lake for?"

The one addressed looked quietly along the knife-blade, then, with a quick movement, whipped his pistol from its sheath and levelled it between the man's eyes.

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"Put that thing back," he said. And the rustler put it back.

"Now," continued the prospector, "what do you mean by coming here and talking in that style? We've just come in and haven't seen the people yonder."

"I mean," retorted the rustler, "that you've been over there, you've seen them, and you told them it was me that killed the Indian they found by the lake."

"Never knew they had found an Indian by the lake."

"Well, they did, and I'd like to know why they can't let me alone about it. Why are people always pointing at me and talking about me, and saying I did it?"

The prospector stared in surprise. "I don't know," said he, "unless you did."

The rustler stamped his foot, tossed his arms, then walked away, while the prospectors, with surprise still on their faces, came over to us to inquire what manner of man he was with whom they had held this interview. We did not know.

On the second morning after this incident three of us set off afoot on the trail that

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leads by way of Mount Washburn and Tower Falls to Mammoth Hot Springs, leaving our guides to take the wagon by the alleged road to this latter point, through the geyser district. We had not been two hours on the march before the sound of horses was heard behind us, and we stood aside to let them pass. A herd of Indian ponies emerged from the shrubbery, and behind them rode the rustler. A noble forest lifting around us, the cañon of the Yellowstone yawning at our right, its terrors half veiled in wondrous color, sweet air, pure sky, and cheery sun made a joyous harmony, and with it the glum, suspicious figure of the rider was out of key. At sight of us he pulled up sharply. "I want to go to Gardiner," he said.

"That's where we are going," one of us replied.

"Will this trail take me there?"

"Yes; but if you will turn back and go the other way, taking the first turn to the right, you'll find a road. This is nothing but a trail."

He was silent for a moment, then said,

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as one who was half in sorrow, half in bitterness, "You're all against me, and you're trying to get me wrong on this, but I can find the trail in spite of you,—I can find it." And without further word he struck his horse and bounded on, the ponies scampering before him. A wearisome yet magnificent walk of two days and a half, through wilderness and over mountain-top, brought us back to Mammoth Hot Springs just as Toot drove in with our team, and, clambering into the wagon-seats, we resumed our ride. How and where we passed him I do not know, but during a halt soon after the rustler came up from behind, and clattered by with his ponies for the third time.

"Bozeman?" he cried, pointing northward.

"Yes," we answered.

The old doubt came into his face. "I'll find it in spite of you," he repeated. And he galloped away, each horse marking his course by puffs of dust that drifted up from the sage brush like a volley smoke. Our guide watched the retreating figure curiously. Then he remarked, with noncha-

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lance, "That fellow's still got the Injun on his mind. He's doing his best to get his neck stretched by the time he gets back among folks."

The man's deed was self-proclaimed. In quarrel, possibly, but as likely with intent, he had killed an Indian, taken his effects, and hurried from the scene of his crime, perhaps to avoid pursuit, perhaps to avoid himself. Alone in the wilderness day after day he had brooded on his act until it was named to him in the whisper of leaves and gurgle of waters, written on mountain snows, painted in the sunset, re-enacted in moving shadows of the forest; when he met his fellow-men again nature had told them of it; so, men and nature he suspected. The brand of Cain was stamped upon his heart: with his own unwitting hand he bared his breast and showed it to us. I never saw him after. Was our guide's prophecy fulfilled, I wonder?

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Satisfaction with the Country

IF only we grown-ups had the child's imagination the walls of cities would not shut in upon our minds, however they might keep us from walking and seeing. Even then we must have known the country in youth to revive it in our memories and build hopes upon it. We cannot create much in our heads: we merely rearrange old material, and give out in proportion as we have taken in. We took it in through our ancestors, or it was cumulative through them, maybe, for whence did Emerson gather his might? Anyway: having seen the country in childhood, having breathed and smelled it, having rolled in its grass and snow and swung in its trees, having eaten its fruits and drunk of its springs, having been in touch with its spirit, it is ours for aye, and we bless those healing moments when in fancy we are miles from

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rattling pavements and the loud-speaking throng. We are in the home of our youth, or in that serene retreat that we promise for our age, that ideal; for all futures are ideal, and unseen glories never fade. Our feet may be in the market, but our vision is among the hills. We live an idyl—for ten minutes.

Most of us are willing to live idyls, at least, until we are a dozen years old. We are measurably content till then. Yet, while content has been best expressed by youth, it should be a gain of later life, when ambition is sated or given over, when bulk and stiff joints incline one to easy-chairs, when monotony has been discovered in shows and sights, when the futility of much struggle has been proved, when we have learned that it is less in the outward world than in ourselves that we are to find rest and satisfaction. It is not to be denied that there is a charm in stable things, and there is a "love of security, of an habitually undisputed standing ground or sleeping place," that should have shown itself in every man, though tenement-bred to the

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third generation. Nothing is sadder than what they tell us of the passing of the home. It is not true, but it is melancholy that it should even seem so.

For if civilization is more desirable than barbarism (it is not sure that its softness and barrenness are good for us), it is because it has been made by the owned house, by securities that make content. Years of effort ought to have that object in view, that reaching of a sufficiency of some sort,—of money, or ways to do without it. No doubt it is right that our years should be forceful. It is no less a social than a natural law. The elements are in motion and fusion, the tree and the clam aspire, and men cannot help their drift into difficulties; but when we have learned the lesson of life,—that there is no lesson,—we are entitled to an hour of ease in congenial work. Few of the mass do the work they like to do. Perhaps only the men in the arts and professions are so employed, the clerks, merchants, laborers, even farmers, being what they are by force of circumstance. The trouble in getting content is

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that all want too much. Thoreau was a wonder in that respect. He required only a place to sleep, a bit of plain food, plain clothes, a few books, some pens and paper, and liberty. Men had nothing more that he needed, and nature met his other wants.

Ah, that problem of life: how easy to solve before we know it! The child is more right than the man, and the man most right who is still a child. For what does he gain who loses his soul, and how many keep their souls against the daily clutch of greed, ambition, envy, appetite? The child is full of the wisdom of the All from which he comes. He is above the trifles of grown-up life. He eats and sleeps and plays and sees, and if he is lent to the proper parents, he has earth to walk on, blue, sweet air to breathe, sun to brown him, birds to teach him, shy, four-footed creatures to be his mates, and trees, flowers, rocks, and waters to put pictures, health, and gladness into him. Thus conditioned he is content, and content is wisdom. As we end the cycle of life we return toward the beginning: we realize that we have been wandering from

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our chances, that our furious struggling with books and machinery has not made us happier, that every advance toward ease and power has cost us a better comfort and brought fresh difficulties; so we go toward simplicity again. They said that when we were so perfectly served by steam and electricity as to need little work with our hands and minds we would be freest and happiest; but contrast our eager, anxious state with that of men in the last century. We spend fewer hours in shops and offices, we climb, walk, and row no more, for lifts and cars and ferry-boats take us where we like, the poorest of us lives as well in the matter of creature comforts as the rich colonist used to live, we have more common treasures in parks, museums, and pictures, life and property are better defended; yet, where is the fine old leisure of that other day? Where do we get our air? Where are the artists and artisans who never sell a thing until it is done as well as they can do it? Where is the country home? Would to heaven our children might have five years among the hills! They would seldom go

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back to town. Nature claims them, but we deny her call.

These numbing years in town spoil us for the sane, true life of our fathers. When we go into the country we do not see its wealth of beauty, we do not know that when we fling ourselves face down among the weeds we have enough under us to keep our eyes busy for a sixmonth, we do not realize that serenity may soon allay our vexations: we understand only that there are no theatres, French cooks, or electric lights, that we may be a mile or two from any other human being, that, with nobody to talk to, we must even think. Solitude, that is blessed to him who can use it well, is a thing to terrify the cit.

In the innocence and first-handedness of youth the longing to keep touch with nature finds easiest expression, and Pope, Cowley, Horace, Herrick, Jefferies, Thoreau, Burroughs, and their like said their truest things or set their way most safely when they were new in the world. I remember with yearning the sense of arrival at a true, fit place when, as a child, I

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reached my grandfather's home in the mountains on my summer vacation. School, town, the world's affairs,—these fell off like husks and were forgotten, a great, calm satisfaction was reflected from me over the face of the world and back into my eyes, the green terraces were sleek with content, the brook sang a song of gladness, the woods were whispering welcome, the dear old crows laughed in their homely way above the fields, and the undertone and overtone of insect life completed a major chord of happiness. Time might stand still : things were well enough.

Commiserate with the one who has no hours like these. Encourage him to dwell with sentiment on his various flats and boarding-houses, on the happy moments spent in listening to the water as it rippled into the kitchen sink, on the smell of the janitor's corned beef, and garbage in the basement, on the late and early sounds in the street below, on the green of the geraniums on the fire-escape. Poor fellow! He has known some joy, but of home and country he understands nothing.

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Now, I am not deriding human ties, nor preaching their neglect, nor urging monkish asperities. It is as easy to enjoy a cultivated taste in the country as in town. It should be easier, because there are fewer dissonances and interruptions. There is no reason why the farmer's library should consist of a patent medicine almanac, why the direst of Axminster carpets should cover his floor, why his wall-paper should be a convulsion of purple pagodas and green roses, why his pictures should be certificates of prizes at the county fair and chromos published as advertisements by millers and varnish-makers. Nor can he be supported in his practice of shutting up the parlor for company: a dark, musty place he makes it, with its closed blinds, its black hair-cloth furniture, its white tidies, its gilded coffee-cups as shelf ornaments, its centre-table with the Bible, Mrs. Hemans's poems, and the report of the United States Agricultural Department for 1879 canonized upon it, and its wreath of preserved flowers, used on the coffin of a maiden aunt. In fact, the beauty that is

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out of doors ought to have some reflection in the house. Could we enlist Ruskins enough to teach simple and sensible ideas on beauty to our farmers? Could we persuade them to stop shooting their best friends, the birds? Could we make them see the superiority of way-side flowers to bare, trim borders?

One of my dreams has been of a house of art, founded deep in the needs and respect of a people whose capacity for making and translating beauty is surpassed by none. From this house should radiate ennobling influences toward every quarter, so that hewers of wood and drawers of water roundabout would view it with pride and admiration, and shape their course moderately by its examples. It should be far from town. That house should be a nursery to talent; a refuge to genius. Oh, yes, we all know that some work is best done in the rush and pressure of competition and need. And we ought to know that some other things are spoiled by just those conditions. Fielding scratching at a belated manuscript with a wet towel on his head has been

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cast up against us as an example. It ought to be as a warning. He wrote surprisingly well, but how much better and how much more he might have written if he had kept steady, taken his sleep, and left off the towels! To be sure, there are certain who excuse their laziness on a plea of meditating. Genius, they say, is spasmodic, and an idea requires incubation. If they show results, well and good. If at the end of years they are but just beginning to concrete their idea, we may dismiss them from the brotherhood.

But how much the world might gain in truth and its sublimation which we call beauty if those who work and seek to make truth common might dwell apart when the need was, and study, write, invent, weave, draw, paint, model, carve, etch, engrave, compose, shape metal, glass, porcelain, and enamels, decorate, devise costumes even, and plan gardens! Ah, many a man and woman has sighed for the cloister or the silences of the mountains, there to dream the dream to the full and bring it thenceforth into being of marble,

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canvas, music, or common human words. They conceive a noble ideal, and have begun to paint or write it, when—bang, bang at the door! It is the wolf in the form of the landlord. Or it is worse: some frivolling time-waster with his batch of social gossip. How can a symphony, a poem, or a picture find its way into the world with scare-wits and clutch-purses to bar the exit?

What we need in this day is a secular monastery: a country house of art. If we are to believe the sociologists and therapists, the world is crowded and hustled, the strain of business competition and social rivalry is increasing, more and more men have fallen into the way of working for a wage, merely, so that their work lacks care and thoroughness. But what is one to do? The poverty of the artistic class is traditional, inevitable. One cannot serve two masters, and a combination of business and art is rare indeed. By just so much as a painter is a business man is he the less of a painter. The world is full of successful wrecks: makers of pot-boilers

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who have killed their genius in the commercializing of their work. The real artist holds to his task and does his best through thick and thin; he lives on crusts and color. Mediocrity pooh-poohs at this, but it is true. I have known worth in rags, and rejoice if I have helped to make it known. But bitter is the time of waiting, bitter the gnawing of an empty stomach, bitter the derision of a cheap success.

Our millionaires give little to the public from whom they derive their wealth, and as they are millionaires because they are worldly, they frown on schemes that do not promise cash dividends. Still, here and there among them is some Pratt, some Peabody, some Cooper, some Girard, whose heart is as large as his purse, and whose love is higher than his liking. Such a man may be the founder of an art-house in the future, for we can hardly suppose any government so perfect, so delicate, that it could be trusted with this boon. Or the rich man may be the patron of the rising artist, and pay himself for his advances out of the artist's work. In this he will only

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play the part of the daimios of Japan, the feudal lords who were fathers to their people, and whose interest, rather than authority, brought the old art of that nation to so fine a pass. Suppose the case of a Japanese potter. His mind was free to put upon his work, for his daimio would see that he and his family suffered no privation. He had only to prove himself trustworthy to make his time his own, and he could experiment with pastes, shapes, decorations, and glazes as much as he pleased, destroying every failure and working on and on until he had gained the form and color that he wished. It is this patience which comes of security, this abolition of all sense of pressure and passing of time, that made the lacquers, swords, embroideries, carvings, and bronzes of Japan most perfect of their kind. Japan has changed; it is civilized; and its arts are falling to a Birmingham level. Only in quiet, remoteness, leisure, and assurance of material sufficiency can they be kept from decay. Things will come right some day, for the race is plodding forward; but

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how many flowers are to be crushed under its feet before it begins to appreciate their beauty? And how many will still hold themselves away from flowers, even as things to walk on?

The fact is, thousands know nothing about the country, whether it is a desert place or otherwise, and great mercy is shown to children of the tenements when they are sent there. While it means no more to them, at the outset, than kindnesses and material comforts that they lack at home, they must soon know it to be friendly, and some of them never leave it for the slums. What a revelation it must be to these ragged, profane little scamps to see the fields in their panoply of summer or in their fruitage of October! Is their sight, or instinct, true enough in early spring to read the hint of life in the woods, before the leaves are out,—in the subtle shine, the reddening, greening, yellowing of young branches, even where, in mass or distance, they seem dark? In the poetic lucency of afternoon do they spell romances out of their soft, blackish-

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purple depths,—color evading definition, promising mystery, not livid, hinting at life? Are they drawn to those fastnesses? Is the stir of soul in the person as it was in the race, so that dryads hide there for him? Always baffling, always consciously holding silence over some secret, still the woods are not unfriendly.

And as time passes and we gain insight, nature surely lightens and grows tender. To our clearing eyes, without the fancy of youth, it does not make such pictures for us as it did. The bunch of trees away yonder on the hill is not a castle where deeds of chivalry are acted; the silver shining of the cascade is not a door opening to glories of fairy-land; tree, rock, and sky beget a high worth of their own, and demand a maturer love and admiration. Normal men grow cheery with advancing years, when they touch nature often. It is a curious and suggestive fact that the color schemes of great painters clear, soften, and rise in key as they grow older. Corot began with brown and ended with silver. The first was of the earth; heaven was in the

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second. Turner, Tryon, Troyon, Walker, Thayer, Ranger, illustrate in their art a kindred change. This is not a mere matter of setting the palette: it proves the dawn of spiritual sight upon the eye that has been watching for it across the edge of the material world. So soon as we, too, behold that dawn, life, no less than nature, brightens in it, and we know content. The right-minded rustic is not a gloomy man. If it comes to that, your pessimist, wherever you find him, is a living denial of his faith. The only consistent pessimist is a dead one.

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Solitude and Company

PERMISSION to see with your own eyes and think your own thoughts is what you get by being alone. To stop and start when you like is something, too. In company there is often a tendency to overdo, the impact of a motion enduring longer in a crowd than in the individual. In regiments of our citizen soldiery one seldom hears of a man dropping out on a march of a dozen miles, though burdened with rifle and accoutrements, and so unused to exercise that a six-mile walk at other times would be a feat. This organization, multitude, and unity are a gain, so far as material force is concerned, and although in one sense a crowd is only as strong as its weakest member, as a chain is as strong as its weakest link, in another sense the less effective is buoyed up and beyond himself by the contagion of power. Combination,

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which merges and subjugates the individual, amazingly multiplies his force. In my teens I had to do guard duty at a hanging. Half of our company was detailed to keep order among the rough, curious, not ill-natured multitude outside. After the fall of the drop the crowd made a rush at the fence, threw it down and poured into the yard around the jail. Our relief, sixteen in number, stood near the door when this occurred. On an order to charge bayonets we turned the corner of the building and swept upon the crowd with a yell. Wavering for a second, the human deluge turned square about and ebbed toward the street again, screaming, struggling, strewing the ground with hats, parasols, and baby carriages. The sixteen had dispersed a thousand, and without causing any injuries to speak of. It was authority against disorder; organization against crude force. Individually the sixteen were outmatched by many sixteens in the mob, but the latter had no cohesion.

Useful as cohesion is, socially, we should not ask too much of it as individuals, al-

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though to cut loose from society as often implies depravity as it does spiritual stoutness. One experiment in enforced vagrancy makes me doubt if I have enough of either to brag about. You can keep away from humanity well enough when there is no humanity to keep away from,—when you are hunting or prospecting in the mountains, chopping in the forest, reaching the north pole or rowing home from it; but to use the roads, to pass houses, shops, churches, and bakeries, to be within touch of civilization, yet to hold aloof and deny yourself to it, or it to yourself, that takes genius.

A man might school himself to be at once a tramp and a philosopher, but Arid Artemus and Pinguid Percy who rap at our door for food, and wax wroth if they get sandwiches instead of four-course dinners, seldom discover in them the making of philosophers. Thoreau and Diogenes were nearer to this possibility, though I fancy that Diogenes had a few shares of gilt-edged stock to help him to take life so indifferently, while Thoreau was not much of

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a tramp, as we understand the species, inasmuch as he wandered across lots, was content without pie, rum, and tobacco, seldom slept in other men's barns, and never begged for money. Nature is to each man a reflection of himself, and with empty pockets and empty stomach he may find it as hard to be entertained and instructed by it as if he went into the road with an empty head.

All the same, we need more solitude to develop in our own way. We develop in the ways of other people; hence the conventionality of towns. Our tour afoot, on a bicycle, a-horseback, or in a carriage, that is made alone, will prove to us what manner of folks we are, and may surprise us. If we are frightened and lorn at the first day without society, but feel a little more interest, confidence, and comfort on the next, things are not going ill with us. By the end of a week we shall have arrived at comparative independence. We walk to find out as much about ourselves as about objects by the wayside,—not to gain a self-conscious knowledge, for that is morbid and

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intolerable, but facility in doing and thinking, the self-reliance of a wider resource. And aptness with the hands is not enough: aptness of mind is equally good for us. Without in the least underrating the dignity and importance of hand-work, realizing, too, the happiness and health that come of it, I fancy an unspoken contempt in some who work with their muscles for men who work with their brains and nerves, —the intellectual and emotional element in society, the scholars and artists; yet it is easier for the scholar to plough, to hammer, to weave, to drill, than for those who do such things to gain mental poise and fulness, supposing that they lack it in the first place, and that their minds are always narrowly on the material fact; so the scholar may, in the end, be the more self-complete of the two. Manual labor has its decided advantage, however, in the hours for thought, study, and fancy that it gives to whoever will take them. While planing, hammering, and hoeing, as while tramping, the mind is at liberty for idyls or Iliads. The lore of Edwards, Burritt, and Cobbett,

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the discoveries by Hugh Miller, the researches of Ferguson, the poetry of Burns, were easy and natural results of their work-a-day business in shops and fields.

The charm of nature's company is that it is always pure and sane, and it is the only company that is never otherwise. It may be gloomy, it may be terrifying, but it is healthful, great, and lifting. One discovers affinities and humanities in it; even mathematical accuracies and rhythms. We love rhythm in the swing of the sea, the pulse of the wind, the gait and flight of animals, but it exists for the sight, no less, in the architectural recurrences of rock forms, as on the Hudson palisades, in the columned forest, the parallels of grass, the symmetry of flowers, the ordering of the clouds. Trundling homeward on the bicycle path, the trees file past in the sunset with a lulling effect, as of verse. Riding over a road in twilight, the regular crescents of dark, left by a joggling flood from a watering cart and extending as far up the road as the eye will carry, have this same quieting effect of repetition, and joined with the

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stately march of the trees make the way a music.

Where do we find these stimulants and sedatives in town? Europe is a little better off than we are in artificial helps to spiritual and intellectual life, for it has cathedrals. We could spare all the slums of New York for one vast, shadowy church where grave spirits walked and hushed our turbulence. We are so wondrous fond of artificial light, and so delight in spectacles, that if we had Ely or Lincoln in our country, the first thing to do with it would be to fill its inside with arc lamps. We are resolved upon it that nobody shall be alone, or quiet, for a minute. Even music, which ought to be a contemplative man's recreation, is enjoyed in glare and heat and hubbub. Plead for silence and shadow, and the audience replies that opera and concerts are social functions. How often you are told by these people, as if in the effort to support that position, "I like music, but I don't understand it"! They wouldn't say, "I like language, but I don't understand it." Music is a language of the emotions, and is to

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be understood by them, not by the intellect. A temple of music—what a glorious heritage that had been! A temple, grand, gothic, half dark, free from garish color and glaring gaseliers, a holy place where the advance agent cometh not, where prime donne do not hate each other, where managers neither bilk nor vaunt, where men may meditate and purify themselves; a temple where art is worshipped, not consciously, but where the best of itself leaves its impress of blessing on the receptive soul. We want a concert hall where emotions can be felt without publicity. Bare, squalid places, like our seaside pavilions, are æsthetically impossible. You can't thrill with "the ride of the valkyries" nor weep for "Death and the Maiden" (unless they play it so badly) in these dusty, sun-dizened barns. European beach-chairs might be good things in halls where the music does not fit, because in them you are in a sort of private box and can shrink from the staring, over-dressed multitude and put your mind on the orchestra. Color, too,—how large a part that might play!

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How we might be warmed and contented by it!

Solitude must have led me into the thought of music, for of all the arts that of harmony beguiles one most efficiently to loneliness. We conjoin harps and hermits in tradition and poetry. The hermit of Walden played on a flute as he rocked on the water. If I lived in a cave I would have a piano, a library, and a dog. Dogs, and their fleas, come to me as naturally as if I were raw meat. You ought to have seen the dog I gathered in my Berkshire tramp,—Sassingers. He was couched in a yard in Great Barrington—a fine, big chap —looking as if he were waiting to be invited. So I asked, "Old fellow, how would you like to take a walk?" And he said, with his tail, he would like it, and we formed a partnership on the spot. I felt as if I had stolen him, but a farmer relieved my conscience on that point when he told me that he had been wandering about the place for a week. Sassingers was mighty good company. He climbed Monument Mountain and lay panting on

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the top while I enjoyed the view; and he enjoyed it, studying the terrible pitch-off, where the Indian girl went down, with more interest than he showed in the hills that tumbled along the distance. Some animals do not see far, and, indeed, I think most quadrupeds are near-sighted. Their hearing is better, but even there they are not accurate, for I have known a dog to be kept busy for a whole hour barking at the echo of his own voice. He thought it was a rival. Sassingers and I had several instructive conversations. He followed me almost to the door of a tavern, where I was to prime him royally with meats, and disappeared under my nose.

Another dog, a wheezy veteran, adopted me in the Catskills, and was always humping up at me to be scratched. Dogs have a "fiddle spot" on their backs that when rubbed or patted affects a sympathetic nerve and makes them scratch at vacancy with a hind leg. Cats have a similar place at the base of the ear. Horses have it on their backs and flanks, and one plug used to wobble so in his hind legs when the

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currycomb went over this sensitive place that he could hardly persuade himself not to sit down. Cattle, too, like to have their necks and heads rubbed, and one old bull of my acquaintance used to bawl for the comb every time he saw me. In the early days of the railroad on the plains the buffalo found the telegraph-poles to be admirable scratching-posts. At first they polished them, then tipped them over. Cats stand more petting than do most animals, and are always bunting against the legs of chairs and people. In cold, clear weather, as boys know, friction will bring sparks out of a cat's fur, and if while you rub her back with one hand you offer a knuckle of the other at her nose or ear, you will feel the prick of the spark; or, if you hold her baby fashion, this pricking will be felt in the hand that supports her hind legs. After this amusement you may notice a burnt odor in the fur. And did I see two blue flashes on our cat, Skimpolejinks, as he went out into the snow on a sharp night? A funny performance was given by a pug one evening. She had

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crawled under a chair, and as she started to come out her back scraped on a rung of it. This affected the sympathetic nerve, and she began "fiddling" with great industry, first with one hind leg, then the other, running her tongue over her nose, as if to express her satisfaction; and every time she tried to get out the pressure of the rung made her scratch with new violence, so that several minutes passed before she could liberate herself. This back-scratching appears to have some physiological advantage. Poets are fond of it.

Animals do not invariably behave well to strangers. I have been bitten by curs on several occasions, once while riding on a bicycle. Clubs and stones are fit reproofs for that kind of dogs, and the ammonia gun is perfection; but if you are friendly with a dog he will usually treat you with distinguished consideration. A savage dog usually has a savage master, who will upbraid you if you dislike to be bitten. Once a mongrel assailed me as I was returning from a review with a rifle on my shoulder. His owner shouted over

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the fence, with a menacing glare in his eye, "Don't you touch that dog. If you do, by——"

"Do you expect me to stand still here and have him chew my legs?" I asked, in a tone intended to be sarcastic; and I did not wait for his answer, but lunged at the animal with the bayonet. It jabbed him in the leg, and he ran away kiyi-ing. I respect the affection that subsists between a good dog and a good man, but an ill-mannered hound represents a family that does not deserve honor.

As most creatures treat you decently, so, as you walk, let the living things alone. If you will murder them, confess yourself barbarian. Don't allege that ancient excuse of science, at all events. The bird's feathers were all described and counted centuries ago. Please leave him in the tree to sing. The distance from the woodchuck's alisphenoid to his supra-occipital has been measured and charted. Let him make holiday. If this murder and suffering are to continue, in pretence of a service to certain other animals called men,

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at least let the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals name the amount and frequency of the slaughters. A science based on cruelty? A truth learned through torture and outrage? How can we know it for truth under such conditions? We know enough about the anatomy of animals. Let us study them living, for in that form they are a hundred-fold more interesting, more useful, more engaging, than when dead. Let us have no more shooting "for fun," and no more vivisection. The brutalizing of men by such actions is worse, if possible, than the pain endured by their victims.

Animals are closer to humanity than we know. They reason. I have seen cats in revery and dogs in study. They are better than men, because they have longer memories for benefits than for injuries. A cat will return to you, purring, five minutes after you have tweaked his tail. In our latitude the only animals that misbehave themselves are those that meet men. I used to know a deer in Maine. His name was James. Somebody had shot his parents,

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I think, because he joined a herd of cows and became domestic, without anybody asking him to. He would come around in the evening to sozzle his nose in a pail of milk, and no circus was half so funny as his attempts to drink while he only knew how to suck, for he was a nursing infant. He would jam his head into the pail, get the fluid up his nostrils, blow and dance with appetite and vexation, and at last, having sloshed a certain amount of milk down his throat and spilled the rest over the premises, would go to sleep in the barn-yard with the other calves. James may have been over-stimulated with fruit and gingerbread, or he may have been spanked too often for going into the house without wiping his feet, for as his horns increased he begat a temper. He was especially likely to get behind you and charge, so that you sat down tenderly for several days afterward. A pet deer once killed his master by cutting open his abdomen, and I believe that something sudden happened to James about that time.

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This is not the usual disposition of the deer, which is to have as little to do with human kind as possible. Once, while canoeing on a lonely lake, my brother and I came behind a doe, knee-deep in the water and feeding on lily-pads. As the wind was blowing from her, half a gale of it, she did not scent us, and the cautious dip of our paddles was unheard in the lash and ripple of the waves. Steadying the little craft by a grip on a boulder, we waited, six feet away, until she lazily waded about and looked up. As she caught sight of us she flinched, as under a blow, and stood braced, yet transfixed. Her flanks quivered, her eyes and nostrils were dilated. So we remained for some moments, looking at each other. At last, with a leap and a "whoof!" of astonishment, she freed herself from the spell and went bounding ashore and into the woods. The bucks are prodigious jumpers when they are startled or pursued. Undergrowth and fallen trunks are nothing to them, and they seldom catch their horns in branches. While I will not swear that I have seen one leap ten feet

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into the air, it is only because I did not measure the distance.

Do you ever feel this leaping or flying impulse? You must have done so if you have descended mountains afoot. Something equine or aquiline develops in a man before large spaces. He wants to fill them,—to increase himself,—to stamp his feet into the earth and claim it. When I weighed less than now there was a fearsome delight for me in bounding down hills, taking great leaps as I ran. That gives one a mastery of the air: he becomes a brother of eagles. It would not surprise him to find that birds and bats were racing with him. I have raced with sparrows on a bicycle. Swift motion of your own making or direction always has this thrill, and you shout in the exultation of it. Cowboys get their defiant yell from eagles and peacocks. They resemble both.

While animals are generally select in their tastes and object to our society, they are surprisingly indifferent to us sometimes. One genius claims that snakes, even rattlers, may be made as tame and gentle as

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kittens. I have played with small ones without putting them in much disquiet. A badger that I met in the Rocky Mountains regarded me with some curiosity while I sat on a stone and talked to him in a low voice, in the hope of winning his confidence, but after a while he concluded that there was no profit in human acquaintances, and he pattered off without the least show of haste or nervousness. A woodchuck, sunning himself on a fence, refused to run as I approached, allowed himself to be addressed at three feet of distance, and even to be poked gently with a stick, without other objection than a look of surprise. Young birds I have taken into my hands, although at first they peck at one's fingers. A bird—it appeared to be a hawk, but was hardly bigger than a robin—invited me to fight him in the Yellowstone country, and running on before me (I had probably intruded near his nest), turned back ever and anon to shake his wings, make threatening lurches, and hiss at me with a wide, red mouth, strangely snake-like.

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The oddest little fighter I ever met was a mouse. On a chill, windy autumn evening I stood on Mount Willard, looking down into the White Mountain Notch,—absurd name for that stupendous chasm,—and absorbed in a view that has few equals, even in our land of wonders. Red lights played along the avalanches of Webster, Chocorua's alp was thrust into a remote, pale sky, the vast, dark bulk of the Presidential range arose out of the forest across the valley, and sheets of cloud, edged with fire, unrolled above the head of fatal Willey. The scene was stern, immense; yet, of a sudden, a mouse distracted attention from it. He ran out from the bushes, perhaps in chase of something, and nearly bumped into my feet. On being driven into a rocky triangle and cornered there he exhibited a rage that was impish. He danced on his hind legs, made rushes at me, snapped his teeth viciously, and was altogether surprising. For this exhibition I rewarded him with a piece of bread and left him to regain his calm.

It is wondrous easy to get acquainted

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with insects, especially if you don't care to. They are like some members of the human family in that respect. But most of the fear in which they are held is groundless. Spiders, for instance: what a lot of falsehood is told about them! There is no authentic case of death from spider-sting, yet sensational newspapers bite several people to death with spiders every year. *Latrodectus mactans*, a long-legged spider with red markings, is the only kind whose bite is likely to make a sore. The domestic centipede is less poisonous than the mosquito, and the tarantula is no more dangerous than the wasp. I have seen grown men dodge the harmless dragon-fly, and some were timid about moths.

One value of a scientific mind is that it saves one from needless suffering and apprehension from beetles and spooks. It saves needless expense, too. A man in my town spent several thousand dollars developing mineral springs on Long Island. There are none. There never will be, because the island is made of pebbles and sand,—glacial drift,—and has no beds of

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mineral. This man took too much on trust, and lacked an examining habit. Another spent quite a sum in digging a deep well, only to find that he could not pump water from it, because a pump will suck water for only thirty feet, as his book on physics would have told him. It was a different sort of mechanic who repaired a pneumatic tube. This had become choked, and to tear it to pieces would have been troublesome and expensive; so a pistol was fired at one end and the echo was timed. Knowing that sound moves eleven hundred and forty-two feet a second, he measured the place of the obstruction by the time it took for sound to travel there and back again, and the tube was opened within a few feet of the arrested parcel.

I confess that this yarn sounds a little like those tremendous moralities of early Sunday-school literature; but if not true it is good enough to be. It may have been told to incite the readers and listeners to virtuous emulation, modern science being somewhat dogmatic in its attitude, and standing almost as a substitute for ethics.

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This may be a wrong attitude, for submission to nature has its advantage no less than mastery of it. They say we improve with the positive or conquering mood. But in that mood we close our intuitions to the appeals and promptings of field and sky and shut out happiness. The law of compensation perhaps makes an average of satisfaction in both cases,—the mastering and receptive. The attitude will depend on the person, as nature, that deepens egotism in one, destroys it in another. Thoreau lived so much with nature that he was the only man of his own acquaintance, and why not make much of him? Others are so impressed by the great pageant that they realize how small a part of it they are. It is the positive and negative again. You find it in letters. Some writers din away on technic, working so much for expression that they leave out things to be expressed. There are subjective moments when elusive nature comes to us with ideas and beauties that are large and new, forecasting and consoling better than words. They seldom come to us in company. In fact, it is a

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quality of solitude that it is medicinal. The hurt soul flies to it for consolations. We draw lessons from the daily aspects of nature. We see the hills cast off their cloud and spell it abroad on the wind; and, seeing, profit: for the rising sun turns all this vapor to a flame, and there is glory where late were blue sorrow and cold night. Our tears are dews that shine in hope and faith. Who has not grieved can wear no crown. Try to be patient when the dark comes down.

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Autumn Sights and Musings

UNHAPPY that lot of ours doomed to city living when our hearts are in the woods and the echoes of bird and brook songs sound across the babble of the shop. But not quite hopeless while the cars are running or bicycles can be had on the instalment plan; nor even when we are tied up in our offices. We can always look up, at any rate, and whoso fails in that privilege neglects high consolations. One man—and he has dyspepsia, too—believes that there will be no ennui in heaven, because he could look at the sky for billions of years without growing tired. Most beautiful and exhilarating of all, perhaps, is the blue,—the soft blue of spring, the sadder blue of autumn, the deep, strong, splendid blue of January; but a common curiosity seeks for shapes and other colors.

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That range of clouds in the east, fifty miles away, their peaks shining rosy in the sunset, their capes and cliffs throwing purple shadows on the walls behind, some sad-colored vapors swimming past to heighten their seeming fixity and likeness to mountains,—how gladly the eye cheats the mind into a faith that these great visions are to harden into rock and snow and stay there for a rest and inspiration to the race! Not only are these creations of the air and sun beautiful in themselves, but they heighten the charm of landscape and keep us interested in their constant change. Mountains grow in picturesqueness when they toss off their cloud blankets of a morning, or fling off gray remnants that smoke along their sides after a rain, lifting out of the forests like the sign of a great battle, until the peak seems to bombard the plain. Crimson fires flash among the Rockies and are quenched in a moment. You start at their ferocity and recall Vesuvius; but it is only the sunset, with thin air to see it through.

Glooms stream pall-wise over the tops

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and around the corners of the Carolina mountains. Curtains of gray wool rise heavily from the Catskills and rank on rank of painted trees come into view,—dramatic, Octobrean, magnificent. On Pike's Peak you shall see, on summer afternoons, how clouds are spun out of the lurking moisture of brooks and bogs, and come flying up the eastern face, the slight skein gathering weight and speed until it whirls past you, a black, inverted cataract, charged, mayhap, with lightning. Yesterday the snows melted from the summit to make those waters, and to-day they are tossed back on the winds. And that eight-mile tramp, high in air, that you took alone, over the crests of the Presidential range in the White Mountains,—you will always remember that, because the clouds were carried in such bulks, so near your head, and thickened into thunder-storms at so many points, and you remembered, as Mount Washington went under, how many had lost their lives in that tall, cold, stony wilderness.

And when you climbed the Wengern

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Alp, now vulgarized by a railroad, you lost the whole Bernese Oberland under a fall of cloud that steamed from the snow-fields in a noon sun; then, looking up to get the bearings, you knew an instant of frank terror, for, falling out of the sky, a mile overhead, was a mass of rock as big as St. Paul's,—only, it did not fall: it was a revelation of the top of the Eiger, reeling through a cloud-gap. You heard the roar of an avalanche, turned away, and the Eiger was gone again.

Mountains with narrow tops, like Camel's Hump, in Vermont, are especially majestic in a winter wind, for the dry snow whirls up the windward face, then pours off into the air in long, straight lines. The banner of the gale is flung abroad, and the farmer, looking up at it, thinks what a rush and whistle it must make and hugs his fire. But stranger still it is to stand under the lee of a mountain of round summit and see a cloud heaped up from the farther side, everywhere moulding itself to the mountain shape, though it is fifty to a hundred feet thick. When sunshine strikes

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this cap of vapor you think of the icing of a cake, but sometimes at a distance the lighting of the mass turns it into an aureole, the peak lying strong, couchant, complacent, through this coronation. This phenomenon is most usual on rainy mornings, when the cloud cloaks cling to the cold, wet peak and are outlined on the indigo dark.

There is a unity of color in every season that proves the artists to be right in their theory of tone. In the country in winter the earth is white and gray, in spring silver and green, in summer green and blue, in autumn brown. In autumn we lament the fall of the leaf, but the universal fading has a beauty of its own. It is not ghastly or abhorrent, there is not even an odor of decay, for October smells are rich and spicy, and the flashes of red among the maples, the violet glow on the distant mountains, the purity of the sky, are the sweeter for the russet in the weeds and ferns. Leaves are wavering down to the frost-singed turf, bird songs grow infrequent, stars of gold spread over the dank

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earth at the brook sides, spruce boughs bear seeming nests that we find to be heaps of needles dropped from the taller pines, and on all the landscape rests the still air of a finished work. Sleeping-time has come to nature, and the fat, heavy-eyed, tired-headed man from town may share her rest.

Yet the crickets are still chirring, the red wood salamander is trilling, bees are humming through the asters, and in quiet spots the drone of flies cheats us into thinking that we have been spoken to by soft tongues, or that we have caught a note of talk in a thicket where sweet-voiced girls or gentle children are telling confidences. There is a wonderful human quality in these wood sounds. I suppose everybody has heard the speech of flies' wings. It is nearly as plain as those airy voices that "syllable men's names" in solitude.

And a great delight in autumn is the wind. Its pæan, grand, solemn, yet with an under-note of joy that comes of liberty, is best heard on the edge of a wood, where you can see the wide, waste space that it

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will fly to. It has more sheer vigor and exhilaration when it gets upon a mountain top; but up there it seldom has anything to fight, for it likes to wrestle, it enjoys cutting itself against trees, wires, and fences, as a horse on the last stretch of a race takes whip and spur; so it booms and hisses among the weeds and rocks, and swoops down the leeward slope to tussle with the woods. But they love it, too, even when it costs them, here and there, a branch or a hatful of foliage, for they can repair themselves. And to see the golden rain of leaves at such a time is worth long journeys. Every live man knows that the world wakes when the wind blows. How the clouds hurry and dance, the water ruffles and leaps, the loose earth flies, and trees wave their arms as if appealing to be made foot-loose, that they, too, might be as men, walking! Failing that, the trees clutch their toes the tighter into the ground and thrash their limbs and bend and toss their heads. Perhaps by exercise they grow in height and grace, like other creatures, as we know they do in muscle. The

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Olympic games are on when the wind is up.

Nature encourages these contests; exists by them. Let the best win. That ambition to excel among men is a mere selfish struggle for wealth and honor, not as in trees and animals, for life. I have but a temperate admiration for the average public man, finding that in too many cases public service makes for some manner of private end. Devotion to nature, and to men through nature, is always pure and wholesome. We may rely on it that one involves the other, for all nature cries out against men escaping from her. If they attempt it she brings them back with the lash of passion, appetite, chill, or thirst. She pursues like Nemesis and befriends like God. Yet, we read, or feel, a slow advance toward higher, abler forms in the vision of beauty that the world daily puts before us. Man's physical self is a symbol of the trend of nature toward mentality. He is held by the feet to the ground he sprang from, his vital and procreative machinery are established next,

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but soaring over them is the head, dome, and crown of the work, farthest from the earth, holding in least bulk what is most of value.

Water lets in a wondrous light and charm to the dullest landscape. It makes a glint of heaven on earth, and it pleasantly assures us that things are not in fixity. In the fall, when the dropping of foliage exposes it more clearly from a distance, its range of color is the range of the painter's palette. From the snow of foam to the ink of storm, it is all there. The lake is gold in the sun, silver in the moon, saffron in the dawning, turquoise at mid-day, pink, orange, and crimson at evening, sapphire in the twilight, and lapis lazuli after dark. The ocean is gray, brown, green, blue, purple, in as many hours as there are colors. Niagara holds the eye not less by its mass and power than by the exquisite beryl of its flood,—a color that belongs to all the fresh-water seas of this continent. In some of our smaller lakes there is a surprising clearness, the bottom being plainly visible at a depth of thirty or forty feet,

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and in the Silver Spring of Florida at eighty feet; yet, in every case there is local color: amber, green, brown, blue. In some of the mountain countries where the swiftness of streams erodes their banks there is an earthy tinge to the water, while autumn leaves, steeping in pools, darken them like shadow.

By far the most gorgeous color I ever saw in water is the blue of the hot springs in the Yellowstone country. Despite the crinkling of the surface and the steam that drifts up from it, the water is singularly limpid, and one may look far down their stony throats as into a mass of most magnificent sapphire, faintly tinged with green. A clergyman looking long into one of these pools was made almost ill by the force of emotion stirred by it. It was like excessive perfume, or Chopin's music. Perhaps the strict, clean life led by that man made him the more sensitive to these glories; perhaps he found in the great temple of nature the same harmonies, the same symbols, the same truths, that he preached at home.

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For color, form, and light, rocks, woods, and waves, they preach, if only one will listen. It is those who refuse to listen that are so rough, so unmoved by the daily pageant of the world. It is compensation again, however, that makes them the easiest victims of emotional morality, and some of the strictest church people are those of the mountains and the backwoods. They still live in a past time and should be happy, if they knew how. Doubt has not reached them yet. They do not know of the changes that have gone through common thought in these late years. In the cities thought has become free and hard. Republican ideas rule. Science is dominant. Yet the respect for goodness is shown in the demand for it. Business hardly supports itself in crooked ways, stealing is no longer respectable, nor even a part of politics. In the exact practice of our thinking religion has become poetry, and poetry is effete. There are more Christian philosophers than Christians, more Hebrews than Jews, more Deists than Unitarians, more good people than church-goers.

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There is impatience with forms that do not dress a substance. With the Chadbands and Pecksniffs these are heavy times. A drunken priest is unfrocked as smartly as a pickpocket is clapped into jail. Faith without works is dead.

Yet the religious spirit is wider abroad in this day than ever before. We do not ask how much belief a man may have, nor how far he endorses such and such a reading of such and such a text, because we heartily do not care. But we do hope that he is honest in his business, good to his family, votes for the public welfare, and does not stagnate mentally. We try him by practical tests. We praise his charity, unless he gives to beggars, when we condemn him for his weakness and want of sense in encouraging pauperism. We love him for his kindness, unless he is better to the erring than to the steadfast, when we deplore a sentimental weakness in his character. But we cease to ask how he translates *αἰώνιος*, or if he remembers the Thirty-nine Articles, or the Nicene Creed. He may take the story of Adam in Eden as

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fact or figure: it is all one to us. The man himself, not the faith he has, passes under the world's judgment.

Strange, then, in this practical time, that piety commands the same respect it had in the Crusades. Yet not strange when we consider. We may applaud the daring of the iconoclast, we may demand that record and tradition pass and make way for fact, we may avouch the hopelessness of jibing geology with the Mosaic books. Why? Because by so doing we deem that we encourage truth. And in the wide and generous survey of our kind that we begin to take, we realize that piety is also a step to truth; that the church is not a superstition, but an inquiry and a hope. In whatever way this aspiration moves, in voice or act or wish, it commands respect and reverence. Beware that man who sneers at piety. Help to unmask deceit, fleer at the jobber and self-seeker who has learned nothing but a mouth humility in his church, but before the spectacle of a soul repentant, earnest, aspiring, thankful, resolute, uncover. Let

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us separate merit from the hypocrisy and cant that pretend to it; then, whether it go under the name of ethics or religion, or even policy, our honor of it shall encourage it to grow. None shall rob the sorrowing and suffering of the comfort they find in religion, and none shall mock at any yearning to be good because the prayer finds easiest utterance in a churchly form.

Tradition agrees that the churchly is the most perfect and dignified communion with the soul of creation, but one may hear farmers, soldiers, choppers, prospectors, and other out-of-door people swearing their prayers in right English when the spirit is on them. The spirit that is erect before its fellows and humble before the powers: that spirit lives a prayer. We may as safely look for moralities in our door yards as to expect to find them, with other felicities, on Saturn fifty years hence; yet, back or forward, whichever way we throw our look, it is brighter than here and now. In the desert world we cry as we gaze on the heavenly hills, "We shall have no pain there." Then we dare the heights

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and find rock, snow, and sand ; while back in the plain our way is green : grass fed with our blood and tears.

And now for a flight to the reddening forest, for I take my vacation, of choice, when the frosts nip and the summer boarder has departed. The old duds come out of the trunk, the grip that holds so little, but enough, swings on my shoulder, there is a ragged staff in hand, some smoky miles are ahead ; then, a haven in the mountains, and a hold, if not on happiness, at least on facts.

None of your candy thoughts, none of your laws and books. A place in the sun, a stinking pipe, meat that a hunter cooks, a sound of wind in the pines, mighty and wide and deep, and water to drink, and peaks to climb, and hemlock boughs for sleep : that's what I want. For I weary of art, I sicken of cant and whim. The earth is right,—I would live as true ; stout of heart as of limb. Men are friends of a day ; they don't outlast the hills : I leave the town and its mob, heart-cold, surging around the whirling mills whose hearts are

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dust and the millstones gold. I love men best in loving what makes them good. Wrapped in a star-born calm, secure upon the sod, to be man is meet in that grand old wood. One knows himself, and God.

THE END.

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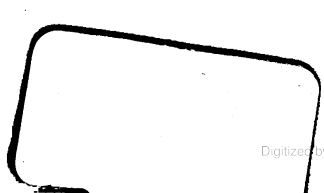
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